DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 277 107 EA 019 018

TITLE	Board Presidents' Handbook. Revised.
INSTITUTION	California School Boards Association, Sacramento.
PUB DATE	Nov 85
NOTE	105p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publication Sales, California School Boards Association, 916 23rd Street, Sacramento, CA 95816 ($12.95).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrative Policy; Administrator Guides; Board Administrator Relationship; *Boards of Education; Conflict Resolution; Decision Making; Elementary Secondary Education; Evaluation Methods; Leadership Responsibility; Leadership Styles; *Meetings; Organizational Communication; *Organizational Effectiveness; Parliamentary Procedures; Planning; *Presidents; Superintendents

ABSTRACT

This handbook for school board presidents and members offers information on policy, procedures, law, leadership, and communication relevant to board meetings; each chapter features page margins for notes and a "backup materials" section for practical use. Chapter 1, "The Role of the Board President," focuses on balance of power, presidential style, and presidential selection. "Board Meetings," chapter 2, identifies factors common to effective meetings that involve agendas, mechanics, public meetings, minutes, and parliamentary procedure. The backup materials provide examples from a California school board. Chapter 3, "Board Communications," stresses developing a relationship between president and superintendent through planning, communication, and evaluation. Chapter materials offer forms for presidents to use to set priorities and examples of communications within California boards. "Board Self-Evaluation," chapter 4, describes the need, process, and methods for evaluation. The backup materials contain a checklist for assessing meetings. Chapter 5, "Leadership Strategies and Resources," presents information on current thinking about causes and management of conflict. The backup materials outline sample policies, bylaws, and rules available from the California School Boards Association. "Calendar of Important Dates for Agenda Planning," the final chapter, demonstrates the formulation of yearly action and legal calendars. An evaluation form for this handbook is included. (CJH)

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Published 1980
Revised 1982
Revised 1985

California School Boards Association
916 23rd Street Sacramento, CA 95816

November, 1985

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Introduction

Congratulations. You've just become or soon will become president of your district or county board of education.

According to those who have served in this capacity before, you are about to embark upon the most interesting, usually satisfying, sometimes frustrating, always challenging experience of your board career.

What does being board president mean?

As board president you could be chief spokesperson for your board. Or you could defer to another board member or staff person as the chief spokesperson.

You could lead discussions or you could contribute your opinion to all or some discussions.

You could speak directly to the press and broadcasters or you could have all media contacts funneled through your staff.

Some board presidents are elected by their fellow board members; other presidencies are in rotation and change every year; still others are selected by various other methods.

The conventional wisdom is that the board of education sets policy and the superintendent (and his or her staff) administers that policy. But where is the dividing line between policy and administration? The answer to that question is, again, unique to your board and its situation. And you, as board president, help the board and staff draw that line.

In sum, your board presidency can be exactly tailored to suit your talents and style and the needs of the board and district or county office of education you serve.

This handbook is designed to help you do just that; it contains a sampling of materials on law, parliamentary procedure, leadership, group dynamics, school policy and communications. A sounding board of your fellow members, as well as comments from other readers over the years, provided the major guidance for the review and revision resulting in this edition of the handbook. As always, CSBA invites your comments on this publication so future editions will continue to meet the needs of school board presidents.

Notes

Chapter 1
The Role of the Board President

Notes

California Education Code Section 35143 requires each high school or city school board to designate one of its members as president at the organizing meeting which the Code requires of all school boards each year.

Although that Code section requires governing boards other than those of high school, city or community college districts only to elect one of its members as a clerk at the annual organizing meeting, another Code Section (35022) requires all boards with five or more members to elect a president. Other sections of the Code have been interpreted to imply that Code Section 35143 applies to all school boards — and most school boards customarily select a president at the annual organizing meeting. [See next page for entire code sections.]

What does the board president do? Although each board and each board president must answer that question in a way that best suits local needs, a typical board president might:

- chair meetings
- act as or designate spokesperson/media contact person
- with superintendent, make sure board members have all necessary materials and information for agenda
- provide leadership for the board and the educational community it serves

To fulfill these basic obligations, school board presidents use leadership skills they've consciously or subconsciously learned. The three articles below outline more of the board president's duties and some strategies many board presidents have found helpful in their presidencies.

The Balance of Power[1]

"All mapmakers should place the Mississippi in the same location and avoid originality," writes Saul Bellow in his novel *Mr. Sammler's Planet*. "It may be boring, but one has to know where it is. We cannot have the Mississippi flowing toward the Rockies, just for a change."

A good school board president has much in common with Bellow's mapmaker: Certain skills and actions simply are required if you hope to get the job done properly. You must be able, for example, to control a meeting; to deal diplomatically with a variety of malcontents; to be articulate on school matters, especially when it comes to speaking with members of the press; and to provide leadership to a group of individuals who bring all sorts of expectations and agendas to school board service.

But once the Mississippi is in place, school board presidents have more creative leeway than traditional mapmakers. Good board presidents manage to pay attention to details while pulling back and gaining a wider view of the school system, its policies, and its operating dynamics. In the process, such board presidents call on and develop far more than basic skills. The *great* board presidents find themselves wearing many hats and balancing all the skills creatively and well.

And that's good. The board president, after all, sets the tone and

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Board Presidency
In the Education Code

Section 35022. President of Board

Every school district governing board consisting of five or more members shall, at its initial meeting and at each annual meeting, elect a president from among its members.

Section 35143. Annual organizational meetings

The governing board of each school district shall hold an annual organizational meeting. In a year in which a regular election for governing board members is conducted, the meeting shall be held on a day within a 15-day period that commences with the date upon which a governing board member elected at that election takes office. Organizational meetings in years in which no such regular election for governing board members is conducted shall be held during the same 15-day period on the calendar. Unless otherwise provided by rule of the governing board, the day and time of the annual meeting shall be selected by the board at its regular meeting held immediately prior to the first day of such 15-day period, and the board shall notify the county superintendent of schools of the day and time selected. The clerk of the board shall, within 15 days prior to the date of the annual meeting, notify in writing all members and members-elect of the date and time selected for the meeting.

If the board fails to select a day and time for the meeting, the county superintendent of schools having jurisdiction over the district shall, prior to the first day of such 15-day period and after the regular meeting of the board held immediately prior to the first day of such 15-day period, designate the day and time of the annual meeting. The day designated shall be within the 15-day period. He shall notify in writing all members and members-elect of the date and time.

At the annual meeting the governing board of each high school district, union high school district, and joint union high school district shall organize by selecting a president from its members and a clerk.

At the annual meeting each city board of education shall organize by electing a president from its members.

At the annual meeting the governing board of each other type of school district, except a community college district, shall elect one of its members as a clerk of the district.

As an alternative to the procedures set forth in this section, a city board of education whose members are elected in accordance with a city charter for terms of office commencing in December, may hold its annual organizational meeting required in this section between December 15 and January 14, inclusive, as provided in rules and regulations which shall be adopted by such a board. At the annual meeting the city board of education shall organize by electing a president and vice president from its members who shall serve in such office during the period January 15 next to the following January 14, unless removed from such office by majority vote of all members of the city board of education.

shapes the public's perception of the school board. It's the president's personality that constituents most often hear and react to. And it's the board president who most often is called upon to referee board member disputes and serve as the peacekeeper during the meetings.

How do the best school board presidents act—and react—in such situations? The JOURNAL posed that question to board members and school administrators around the U.S., asking them to describe what great board presidents do. Here's what they told us:

- **Listen.** "The overwhelming quality necessary," says eight-year school board veteran Frank DiSilvestro, "is to listen." Currently in his third year as president of the Bloomington (Indiana) school board, DiSilvestro emphasizes that listening is as necessary in regular board meetings as it is in such settings as public hearings. Reason: People who address the board must be reassured that they have been understood. "It helps," he says, "to say something like, 'I think I understand what you're bringing up.' Then repeat the statement so the person ***knows*** you heard. Lots of times, people at meetings or hearings keep saying the same thing over and over because they're not really sure you understand." DiSilvestro adds that repeating things also helps other board members grasp the speaker's idea accurately. The smart board president, then, listens carefully and tries to make sure everyone understands what's going on.

Quakertown (Pennsylvania) School Board President Robert L. Leight says eye contact also is a part of good listening: "When people are talking, especially in times of controversy, look them in the eye. Pay complete attention. You're listening, and eye contact ***shows*** you're listening."

- **Be consistent.** It's important that everyone knows what to expect from the board president — at least in terms of how meetings will be run and how school business will be conducted. Several qualities that great board presidents display consistently: fairness (everyone with a legitimate point of view ought to be allowed his/her fair share of time to present information on a touchy topic); calmness ("learning to keep cool," says Ruth Clark, a thirteen-year veteran of the school board in Kelso, Wash., is one of the skills board presidents ought to master right away, as much to preserve their own sanity as to ensure smooth operations); and courtesy (Clark, who served four years as president of her school board, adds that "courtesy and a logical approach" always are necessary to keep things running efficiently).

- **Do the homework.** West Newbury (Massachusetts) Superintendent Joan D. Stipetic emphasizes part of the board president's homework is "being involved in planning the board meeting agenda" and going over upcoming items with the superintendent. Also included in the president's take-home assignments: thorough preparation for each board meeting, including making sure all necessary background materials are made available to fellow board members. Several board presidents estimated that it takes twice as much homework time to be a good board president as it does to be a prepared board member.

- **Keep up-to-date.** Robert V. Haderlein, past president of the National School Boards Association (N.S.B.A.) and a member of 1983's National Commission on Excellence in Education, is a 28-year veteran of the school board in Gerard, Kan., and has served 11 times as board president. He pinpoints workshops and meetings as two of the most consistently helpful ways board presidents can keep on top of important

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education topics. It's up to the president, he says, "faithfully to attend local, state, regional, and national meetings — and then bring back the word to other members of the board." Reason: "There's no school for school board members." By taking advantage of skill-building workshops and publications (Haderlein suggests keeping up-to-date by reading education magazines and publications from N.S.B.A. and the American Association of School Administrators), school boards get help in focusing on important topics "such as teaching, time-on-task, standards," he says. Barbara B. Howard, a former school board member in Georgia and now an elementary school principal, seconds this idea. Workshops, meetings, and professional journals, she says, are what keep school board presidents — no matter what size community they serve — open to new ideas in education. As Lewis Finch, superintendent of Minnesota's Anoka-Hennepin school system puts it: "Meetings and services provided [by education associations] add perspective you can't get in your own locale. It really is supportive to rub shoulders with board members from around the country."

- **Understand the board/superintendent relationship.** A benefit of reading about and discussing board roles and duties, says Georgia's Howard, is that it reinforces your ideas about the way a school board and superintendent should work together. "It's up to the board president," she says, "to make sure board members understand their proper role as policymakers and that they should work ***through*** the superintendent. There's definitely a teaching role there on the part of the president, especially when new members come on the board." Tulsa Superintendent Larry Zenke emphasizes that a board president needs both "to understand and to interpret for others" the difference between the board's role and the superintendent's role. He says the "fine line between what is policy and what is administration" makes it essential that the board president be able to clarify such situations for the board at large.

Minnesota Superintendent Finch adds that another part of the president's role in establishing the proper board/superintendent relationship is fostering "a sense of integrity, where the board and superintendent can be trusted to be forthright and honest with each other. I promise I will not embarrass board members in a public setting and can assume it's a two-way street. That doesn't mean we always agree. As one of our board members put it: 'We will praise publicly, and we will criticize privately.' "

- **Establish a tone of cooperative leadership.** The best board presidents realize that the best style of personal leadership is one that emphasizes cooperation, not conflict. So, presidents should establish good working relationships with the superintendent and other school administrators ***and*** among board members. As Finch explains, "The board president must have a depth of understanding about working with other people. Leadership is more than putting a wetted finger in the air to see which way the wind is blowing. The board president must command respect."
- **Remain firmly in charge of school board meetings.** Georgia's Howard says, "The best board president to work with is prepared, positive and assertive in steering discussion and keeping it on target." Massachusetts' Stipetic agrees. She calls this ability "the skill of keeping the meeting on track. There's a knack in knowing when an issue needs to

be thoroughly discussed and when it's time to move on. And it's important that the president keep the discussion positive." Tulsa's Zenke says the best board presidents have "the ability to use the 'power of the chair' to keep the board dealing with board business," rather than wandering into unproductive political or philosophic areas. It's this "power of the chair," he adds, that keeps a meeting from "degenerating into a circus" when touchy topics are on the agenda.

- **Use proper procedures.** Some school board members say attorneys make great board presidents because of their acquaintance with the morass of procedures all boards must follow. Washington State's Ruth Clark, however, says she found her background as a former PTA president (and as a member of other boards) to be good preparation for running a school board meeting properly right from her first time at the gavel. Both Clark and Indiana's DiSilvestro emphasize that by the time board members have become board presidents, they usually have spent enough time on the school board to pick up pointers on parliamentary procedure; knowing when to be firm and when to be lenient about applying the procedures is the true test of knowledge and skill, they add.

- **Remain open to suggestions.** A natural temptation of novice board presidents is to keep things on an even keel, to avoid the disruption that changes can cause. But Ruth Clark points out that the best board presidents are open to new ideas: "They have to be really interested in other people's viewpoints." Frank DiSilvestro agrees, adding that "you have to check things out, get the most accurate information, and *then* urge the board to make a decision . . . " Although changes can be a pain, he says, "The goal is to listen, to be fair, consistent, honest, and as straightforward as can be; wade through the suggestions, check and recheck, and come to a conclusion."

- **Keep a lid on explosive situations.** It's inevitable that some school board decisions, no matter how carefully deliberated, will upset some members of the community. The wise school board president recognizes that angry reactions go with the territory. When anger flares during a school board meeting, Robert Haderlein says, it's up to the school board president to defuse the situation using "very compassionate language. In tender tones, explain the board's position and how you reached it and why you think it is best for the schools. Don't give in to the impulse to jump up and down or yell or become combative. That never gets the job done; it only hardens positions." If all else fails, Haderlein suggests allowing the complainer his/her opportunity to speak and then, at a later date, asking someone connected with the school board to talk with him/her about the issue.

If a fight breaks out among board members, Haderlein suggests the same dulcet-tones approach. Another tip: Remind the combatants privately of the old management rule that disagreements are fine *before* a decision is made, but a solid front is required afterwards. Although this won't always quiet ideological opponents, it never hurts to remind everyone that destructive infighting only hurts the board — and the schools — in the long run. And if the infighting continues — Haderlein says some boards will debate "whether tomorrow is the 17th, whether night will follow day, and whether the sun will ever come up again" — well, if it gets *that* bad, hunker down and wait for the next board election.

As for the anger board presidents are bound to feel during such trying

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times, the best advice is "never let it surface during meetings." That advice is easy to give, but sometimes hard to follow. One former board president said it and then admitted to needing medication for high blood pressure during some especially tense board times.

- **Be both nearsighted and farsighted.** While juggling all the president's larger roles and public duties, you also must keep in touch with the usual nitty-gritty pieces of board business. This includes knowing the specifics on budget line items and, in some cases, selecting the furniture arrangements for board meetings. Board President Robert Leight, for instance, prefers to hold meetings at a U-shaped table, which he says makes it easier for board members to see each other and for community members to see the board when they are making a statement.

Along with tracking such details, Kansas' Haderlein points out, the president's responsibility includes keeping an eye on what's down the road for the school system. Are student enrollments going up or down? Will a new building be necessary? A board president who manages to balance the needs of the moment with the needs of the future helps keep the board — and the school system — on an even keel, he says.

It's not always fun to be a board president — refereeing board meetings, displaying the wisdom of Solomon, and exemplifying virtues worthy of an Eagle Scout. But those who do it well have the satisfaction of serving not only as mapmakers of the existing territory, but as charters of new directions for boards and school systems.

Presidential Style[2]

The way in which an individual school board president defines the leadership role may be as unique as his/her fingerprints. As long as the board president accepts certain important responsibilities, the approach isn't crucial to success — it's purely a matter of style.

Many school board presidents believe that their role should be to serve as a strong leader for other board members and for the superintendent and staff. Under such an arrangement, the board president may choose to do these things:

- Serve as chief spokesperson for the board.
- Keep abreast of local, state, and national education issues through direct involvement in various conferences and programs dealing with such issues.
- Participate in local, state, and national organizations which have an impact on public education.
- Impart to other board members and to the superintendent and staff a perspective and point of view which result from such active personal participation.
- Help establish for the school district, through discussion with other board members and the superintendent and staff, the goals which are in tune with the needs and resources of the community.
- Assign committees that will help research and provide information to the board at large on special issues.
- Serve as a personal counselor, or informal sounding board for the superintendent as he/she grapples with some of the problems that confront him/her, recognizing that such a role carries with it the need for confidentiality and utmost discretion.

- Personally run the school board meetings and personally follow up to see that agreed-upon action is implemented.

School board presidents who use this style of operation are both successful and unsuccessful. When successful, they are sometimes outstanding. When unsuccessful, the results may be disastrous.

Other school board presidents believe that their role should be to function as a catalyst rather than as a strong personal leader. Under such an arrangement, the board president may choose to do these things:

- Appoint someone to serve as chief spokesperson for the board.
- Involve other board members and the superintendent and staff in conferences and programs dealing with educational issues.
- See that the board and the school district participate in local, state, and national organizations that affect education.
- See that persons who do participate in such activities share their information and points of view with those who have not participated.
- Look to the superintendent and staff and to the other board members for recommendations concerning the goals and possible programs of the school system.
- Periodically provide opportunities for the superintendent and the board to discuss informally some of the concerns of the superintendent, both personal and professional.
- Assign to someone else the responsibility for conducting school board meetings and the necessary follow-up action.
- Deliberately limit the amount of personal involvement and time spent on school board affairs.

School board presidents who use this style of operation are also both successful and unsuccessful. When successful, they have also involved other people to the degree that some of the success is shared with them. Similarly, when unsuccessful, others who have played a role must share in the lack of success. Even when unsuccessful, this model tends to limit or moderate the degree of failure so that disastrous results are less likely to occur.

These two models, or styles, are obviously not the only styles by which a school board president can function, nor are these characteristics necessarily the most important to be considered. Rather, they are used to illustrate that there is no single model for success or failure in your role as a school board president. Whether you choose to use one of these models, or a mixture of both of them, or some other model of your own design, there are certain things for which a school board president should accept responsibility beyond those things that are mandated by school law.

A board president should make sure that his board has a clear understanding or policy regarding —

- Who will be spokesperson for the board.
- Who will have responsibility for development of agenda items for board meetings, and for preparation and distribution of an agenda.
- The way in which the board will communicate and give direction to the superintendent and staff.
- The way in which board members and the superintendent and staff will participate in local, state, and national programs and organizations so that all parties know how the school district will be involved in, and kept abreast of, educational issues and concerns.

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- The way in which information will come before the board for consideration and action.
- The working relationship with the superintendent and staff.
- The orderly and thorough development of information related to issues on which the board must act.
- A proper method to inform all persons affected by a board action, or proposed action.

While it is true that the personal style of school board presidents will vary greatly, these eight "make sures" will greatly help to ensure the success of your role as a school board president, no matter what your style may be.

Some school board presidents serve for one year, some serve for many years. Some are catalysts; some are strong, dynamic leaders; and some are binders who tend to bring other people together on a common issue or objective. No matter which, we hope that these suggestions will be helpful to you as a leader of educators.

Selecting the President[3]

If school boards would give even half as much consideration to choosing board presidents as to selecting superintendents, things would run more smoothly in most school systems. Here's what we mean: Your board's Number One responsibility is selecting the superintendent. On that critical choice rests the quality of leadership and the direction of your schools for years to come. Of course, your board realizes the import of this decision, and you're most likely willing to spend the time, energy and money necessary to plan and conduct a thorough superintendent search.

But if your board is like most others, when it comes to your second most important decision — selecting a board president — good planning and sound decision making seem to go out the door. This decision should be treated with the same care and seriousness that you gave the selection of a new superintendent. But according to our observations, the process of choosing a board president is fraught with political machinations, emotion, or just plain carelessness.

It doesn't have to be that way. In a moment, we'll offer some advice on how your board should attend to the business of selecting a president. First, however, a few ways *not* to do it:

- ***The rotation process.*** On some boards, the presidency revolves automatically each year, giving each board member a chance to serve. This process assumes everyone is equally capable of handling the task. You *know* that's not true.
- ***The honorary presidency.*** Perhaps you've seen boards that operate this way: The same person serves as president for an unquestioned, seemingly endless term. No one wishes to challenge the dear old fellow, who, by tenure in the position, is deemed entitled to keep it. Eventually, of course, he loses his effectiveness. But then the other board members are stymied: They face dumping their longtime president, but they don't want to hurt his feelings.
- ***The luck of the draw.*** On some school boards, no one wants the presidency. The position is viewed as punitive. Everyone chuckles at the poor soul who draws the short straw: The loser is the new board president. The selection, in short, is not based on ability, talent, or even interest — but on bad luck.
- ***The superintendent's choice.*** A few boards become accustomed to

acting on the superintendent's recommendation in just about everything — including the board presidency. It might make sense to rely on your superintendent's recommendations for most decisions, but when your board is choosing a president, it must act on its own. There's no denying that you and the superintendent must work together as a team, but as a board, you must maintain your separate identity.

- *The fight for the political plum.* Perhaps the most common scenario is the haggling, fighting, and maneuvering that ensue when a board is about to select a president. The position is viewed as a plum — perhaps as a stepping stone for those with loftier political aspirations; perhaps as a power position within the school system itself. Some board members' ambition is to play superintendent: The new president's agenda might be to oust the current superintendent, for example, or to be the power behind the school administrator's desk. Or, a board member might throw his hat into the presidential ring the year his term on the board is due to expire, thinking this move will enhance his chances for re-election.

In any case, deals are cut, often with the promise, "I'll vote for you this year if you vote for me next." Gradually, the board separates into rival camps. Rather than coming together as a cohesive, corporate body, the board ends up polarized, with individual members unable to see eye to eye on just about anything.

Each of these methods could subvert your selection of the most effective board president. Reason: Not every board member has the ability to be a good board president. This fact does not detract from their being outstanding board members. It's simply something your board must face.

Other selection methods are available, though some might not be appropriate: One board member, for example, told us about this method in selecting a president: Each member writes on a piece of paper the one person he/she wants to be president; the group hears no formal nominations. The votes are counted, and if one person does not receive a majority of votes, the method is repeated until one member comes out with the most votes. This process can be time-consuming — and because the individual votes aren't publicly reported, states with open meeting laws wouldn't permit it.

The better approach: Your board steps back from politics and asks what kind of leader your school system needs. You review the duties and responsibilities of the board president as outlined in your policy handbook: What are the desired skills and characteristics? Engage in an open and frank discussion of the state of your school system and the challenges it faces in the coming years. Is declining enrollment a problem? Then you'll want a board president who is recognized by the community as unbiased and who can maintain neutrality if the board must decide to close schools.

Besides complementing the unique circumstances of your specific school board, a good board president generally must be able to do the following things:

1. *Orchestrate a corporate body.* Your board president must be able to ensure that the board discusses and debates issues in a hard-hitting fashion. All viewpoints should be aired openly and objectively. The president restricts most discussions to generic issues and concepts and doesn't allow them to center on personalities. A good board president rules out of order any attempts by board members or others to attack

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persons rather than ideas. And when the board is coming to closure on an issue, the good president knows when to cut off further debate.

2. ***Keep communications open.*** Among board members and the superintendent, open communications do not occur by chance. They take place by design — and the board president is central to this process. Example: A superintendent deals with a conflict between a parent and teacher. The matter is settled, but the superintendent mentions it in passing to the board president, who suggests the superintendent include the incident in his next weekly memorandum to the board — to keep the board informed.

3. ***Work well with the superintendent.*** The board president and superintendent don't have to be bosom buddies, but they must be able to work well together. If the president's style of working conflicts openly with the superintendent's, your school board is headed for trouble. These two individuals set the tone for establishing trust and respect on the board and within the school system. Each should feel free to raise any concern or issue with the other — no matter how large or insignificant. Both should be willing to discuss any matter relative to governing or managing the school system.

4. ***Understand the difference between the board president's role and the superintendent's role.*** You've seen situations in which the superintendent has lost the board's confidence; the board's temptation is to elect a president who can take over running the school system. This is one of the worst mistakes a board can make. The job of administering the schools must be left with the professionals. If your superintendent is doing an inadequate job, work out your concerns with the superintendent — even if that means letting his or her contract expire and seeking a replacement. Your board needs a president who can see the school system's long-term needs in spite of the current superintendent's failures; you don't need a substitute administrator.

5. ***Speak for the board.*** A board president must be able to step into the role of spokesman and statesman. That means communicating well with the press and the community and reflecting the decisions of the entire board (regardless of whether the president voted with the majority on a specific issue).

6. ***Choose a leadership style that best serves the board.*** A good board president must be able to select a leadership style that suits the size and current makeup of the board. Example: On a nine-member board with eight vocal members, the president shouldn't have to express his or her own point of view, unless certain points are not raised during discussion. A strong president doesn't allow one viewpoint to predominate, but seeks out the opinions of each board member during discussion. Besides keeping a firm control over running the meeting, a good president plans carefully, conferring with the superintendent about the agenda and a time frame for discussion of each issue. The president understands that a board meeting is no place for surprises.

Of course, an effective president is a strong leader in other areas, too — including insisting on an evaluation process for both board and superintendent; planning for in-service training for board members; encouraging the rest of the board to participate in workshops and conventions at the state and national levels; pushing the board and superintendent to develop long-term goals — and then keeping an eye constantly trained on the school system's mission.

In short, the board presidency should not be the vehicle for launching someone's political career. Nor is it intended for satisfying individual egos or imparting a sense of power. It should not be a token or reward for long and faithful service to the board or community. Your board's presidency is a challenging and sometimes difficult job. Make sure the person you select for the task will best represent the interests of the board, the public, and the children.

Footnotes

[1]"Each board president is unique, but the great ones master these 11 essentials" by Ellen Ficklen, reprinted with permission from the *American School Boards Journal*, April, copyright 1985, The National School Boards Association. All rights reserved.

[2]"Presidential Style — Unique As Fingerprints" from remarks of Pennsylvania School Boards Association Executive Director Fred Heddinger at a PSBA annual board presidents' workshop. Reprinted with permission from *PSBA Journal*, January-February 1974.

[3]"If your board still makes short shrift of selecting its president . . . Stop it!" by Robert W. Heller and Judith H. Katz, reprinted with permission from the *American School Boards Journal*, April, copyright 1985, The National School Boards Association. All rights reserved.

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Chapter 2.
Board Meetings

Notes

As the president of the board your goal is for board meetings which begin on time, end on time and move efficiently through the agenda with homework done in advance by all concerned. If meetings consistently last longer than three or four hours, some changes may be in order. You are the key person in determining the effectiveness and armosphere of every meeting of the board.

One of the major qualifications of a board president is skill and good judgement in presiding over the meetings of the board. You should have knowledge of parliamentary procedure but not be overly formal in its application. You should insist that all who have pertinent ideas be allowed to express them, while at the same time keeping discussions to the point. You should vote on all issues and participate in the discussion as you see fit.

The actions of the superintendent are also very important to the way in which a meeting is conducted. As president you should discuss with the board and the superintendent what his/her appropriate role should be. Board members and superintendents from all sizes of school districts have identified several procedures and factors common to effective board meetings. These include:

1. directing comments to all members of the board, rather than to individual board members
2. not showing an adverse attitude when in disagreement with the board
3. attending all meetings and executive sessions
4. being willing to accept constructive suggestions for the efficient operation of the schools
5. having an energetic, aggressive personality in explaining recommendations to the board.
6. recognizing that value differences among board members are to be expected
7. being willing to take a stand on a controversial issue
8. withholding comments on school matters until they have been thoroughly discussed by the board
9. submitting recommendations on items before meetings

For both boards and superintendents, these include:

10. scheduling discussions in the areas of curriculum, finance and methods
11. supporting majority decisions
12. attending to the agenda on schedule[1]

The Agenda

As board president you should devote some time with the superintendent to reviewing the agenda prior to every board meeting. The agenda should be prepared by the superintendent and his/her staff

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in consultation with you as the board president. Board members should inform you of items they wish to have included and there should be an agreed-upon process for placing items on the agenda. The agendas and supporting papers, consisting of factual data and reports, should be distributed to all board members at least two to three days in advance of the meeting to provide proper time for study. The distribution should be done on the basis of an agreed-upon procedure and timeline between the board and the superintendent.

The agenda for regular meetings must be posted at a place where members of the public including district employees may view it at least 48 hours prior to the time of the regular meeting and, in the case of special meetings, at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. Agendas must contain sufficient detail for the public to ascertain the nature of the business to be conducted (Education Code Section 35145). Agendas should also be sent to the press and other news media. A district must mail notice of all regular meetings to any district landowner who has requested such notice in writing. The request must be renewed annually and may be subject to a reasonable charge.

The actual form of the agenda can be constructed in a number of ways. The following guidelines might assist in determining how the agenda is to be constructed.

1. Clarity — Each item of the agenda should be easily distinguishable from others. Consideration should be given to whether or not a brief one or two sentence clarification statement might follow each item.
2. Order — It is desirable that once a format has been developed that it be used on a continuing basis. Within the general format it is important to determine the order the items are placed on the agenda. If, as an example, the decision is made to have "comments from the public" at the beginning and/or end of the agenda, it should be placed there consistently. If a decision is made to change the structure, it is desirable to announce it one or two meetings before the actual change takes place.
3. Use of Consent Agenda — If a portion of the agenda is to be a consent agenda, it is important to place this early on the agenda so that if item(s) are taken off, they can be placed on the regular agenda under "other items."
4. Timing — Some agendas are constructed to include actual time allocations. As the chairperson, you will need to determine with the superintendent and other board members whether or not the time allocated seems reasonable. This is a method or technique which, once used and accepted, may be extremely valuable in conducting the meeting in a timely and efficient manner.

The structure of the agenda can assist you in conducting effective, well-chaired meetings.

Consent Agenda

Items listed under the consent agenda are considered to be routine and are acted on by the board in one motion. There is no discussion of these items prior to the board vote unless a member of the board, staff, or the public requests specific items be discussed and /or removed from the consent agenda. It is understood that the administration recommends approval on all consent items. Each item on the consent agenda approved by the board shall be deemed to have been considered in full and adopted

as recommended.

It is suggested that when a consent agenda is to be part of the regular agenda, adequate time be taken to explain its use before it is used. At periodic intervals after a consent agenda is implemented, it might be prudent to explain its use and purpose. The basic purpose is a more specific use of time. Sometimes board critics claim that boards are trying to hide things by using consent agendas. This is certainly not the case. Items on the consent agenda are as open to discussion and public record as any other item.

Mechanics of Meetings

School board decisions are considered valid under the law only when a quorum (majority of the board membership) is present. An affirmative vote of the majority of the membership belonging to the board is required for successful passage of a proposal by the board. Section 5095 of the Education Code reads:

> "Whenever any of the offices on any school district governing board are vacant, the remaining governing board member or members elected or appointed to fill the vacancies, who have qualified, shall have all the powers and perform all the duties of the governing board."

The time and place for official meetings should be decided upon by the board at it organization meeting held on a day within a 15-day period that commences with the date upon which a governing board member at that election takes office. The same 15 days are effective in non-election years. (Education Code Section 35143). Regular meetings should be held at least once a month.

Split Votes — Do They Really Harm the Board?

The question of whether split votes during board meetings are detrimental to the health of school districts is of concern to many superintendents and school boards. Traditional thinking holds that split votes are permissible, but that on important issues, unanimous votes are better for the district. Board members with dissenting views should vote their personal opinions on any issue, but once the vote is tallied, all should support the decision wholeheartedly.

In 1974, Jack J. Salsbury completed a study on superintendents' perceptions of the effects of split votes. Salsbury's purpose was to analyze the opinions of California administrators regarding split votes in hope of unearthing some findings and conclusions which could help board members, superintendents and others. Salsbury considered an analysis of split voting important because he believed news media and others often give split votes more attention than they give unanimous votes, which comprise the majority of all votes taken.[2]

In the 116 districts Salsbury studied, approximately one vote out of 14 (7.4 percent) was split.

Split votes occurred most frequently over items of business, finance, curriculum and instruction, and least frequently over matters concerning students, auxilary services and public relations. Split votes occurred less frequently during the fall than any other season.

About one third of the responding superintendents observed that split votes almost never find school board members aligned the same

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way. Another third reported that their boards often or almost always split their votes along the same lines when a split vote occurred. These administrators saw very little relationship between the number of split votes by a board and later defeat of incumbent board members. Apparently, not voting with the majority matters little, if at all, the next time elections roll around.

Salsbury learned that a dissenting board member seldom voted with the majority just to make a vote unanimous. In fact, the administrators in his sample believed that basic differences in philosophy accounted for more than two-thirds of all split voting.

Two thirds of the superintendents reported that there was no change in *esprit de corps* among board members after an increased number of split votes, challenging another widely held belief about split voting.

When the superintendents were asked if they thought split votes were harmful to the community, 71 percent responded no.

Meetings Open to the Public — Brown Act

Because of the chapter in the government code commonly referred to as the Ralph M. Brown Act (Chapter 9, Division 2, Title 5) which was enacted in 1953, school board meetings must be open to the public. The intent of the Brown Act is clear:

> "Public commissions, boards, and councils and the other public agencies in this state exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business. It is the intent of the law that their actions be taken openly and that their deliberations be conducted openly."

Board members should be aware that Government Code Section 54959 provides that "each member of a legislative body who attends a meeting . . . where action is taken in violation of any provision of this chapter, with knowledge of the fact that the meeting is in violation thereof, is guilty of a misdemeanor." (See the CSBA publication, *The Board Meeting: Brown Act Rules,* 1984 edition.)

When the Public Wants to Speak

The public can and should have a voice in board considerations, but according to Gov. Code Section 54957.9 no person or group has the right to obstruct the deliberations of the board. Members of the public must be able to place matters directly related to school district business on the agenda and be able to address the board regarding items on the agenda as they are taken up (Education Code Section 35145.5). Boards are urged to adopt formal written policies in order to allow citizens the opportunity to speak within established time constraints before board action is taken. Many boards have a designated place on the agenda at which time persons in the audience may indicate their desire to speak on a particular item or to present petitions. Persons who wish to have the board act on a particular item should be required to have the item placed on the agenda prior to its distribution to board members.

The public also has a right to address the board on items not on the agenda. The board may not take action on such non-agenda items at that meeting.

Persons addressing the board should be required to state their name and address. Many district policies provide the board president the prerogative to limit the time permitted any individual or group to speak

to an issue. This may appear to be overly restrictive, but there must be some protection against the occasional visitor who insists upon endlessly repeating a certain point of view.

Types of Meetings

Regular Meetings

This type of meeting refers to the normal business meeting of the governing board at which district business is conducted. The time and place of such regular meetings must be set by the board. All regular meetings must be open and public.[3]

Special Meetings

Special meetings are designed to allow the board to deliberate and/or act at a public session prior to the next regularly scheduled board meeting. Special meetings usually take place in order to meet time deadlines. So long as a proper notice is timely given and an agenda timely posted, such a meeting is proper. Only business which is posted in the notice of the meeting is properly considered.

Adjourned Meetings

If the business of a board has not been completed at a regular or special meeting, the board may adjourn to meeting to a subsequent time so long as proper notice of the adjournment is conspicuously posted within 24 hours after the time of the adjournment.

Closed Sessions

A closed session is an exception to the open and public meeting requirement of the Brown Act. (See CSBA's *The Board Meeting* for detailed discussion.)

Notice of Meetings

Regular meetings. Both Education Code Section 35140 and Government Code Section 54954 require a board to determine the time and place of regular meetings. The only notice required is that an agenda be posted where "members of the public" including district employees may view it at least 48 hours prior to a regular meeting.[4] Members of the public must be able to place items on the agenda and to address the board on all agenda items as they occur. (Education Code Section 35145.5.)

It is unclear whether a board may deliberate on subjects not on a board agenda. Apparently, a board could be precluded from deliberating on items not on the required agenda since the purpose of the Brown Act is to require both deliberations and actions to be conducted openly for the benefit of the public. In the *Sacramento Newspaper* case, the Court of of Appeal stressed the importance of the deliberating process — if an item were not on the agenda the public would not be aware of the scope of the meeting and may not desire to attend. As stated in another case, "It is a well known fact that public meetings of local governing bodies are sparsely attended by the public at large unless an issue vitally affecting their interests is to be heard."[5]

As pointed out above, the only penalty for deliberation without action, in violation of the Act, would be injunctive relief.

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Just how far a board must go in notifying the public of intended or potential action is not totally clear. In its most recent amendment of Education Code Section 35145, the legislature imposed an obligation to include on an agenda those items on which the governing board may take action. Evidently, however, this notice does not have to extend to what action may be taken. In *Phillips v. Seely,* a non-education case involving action by a County Board of Supervisors to contract a private attorney for defense of indigents, a segment of the case centered on the adequacy of notice regarding the meeting at which the contract was executed. Referring to the *Carlson v. Paradise* decision and its statement of public policy favoring open and duly noticed meetings, the *Phillips* court said:

> "We strongly reaffirm the foregoing rule, with the observation that where the subject matter is sufficiently defined to apprise the public of the matter to be considered and notice has been given in the manner required by law, the governing board is not required to give further special notice of what action it might take." (Phillips v. Seely (1974) 43 Cal.App.3d 104, 120, 117 Cap Rptr 863)

In a 1973 addition to the statutes, the legislature imposed special notice provisions. Districts subject to the Brown Act must mail notice of all regular meetings to any district landowner who has requested such notice in writing. The request must be renewed annually and may be subject to a reasonable charge.[6]

Special Meetings

When a special meeting is called, written notification must be given to each member of the board and to each local newspaper of general circulation, radio station, or television station requesting notice in writing. Such notice must be given at least 24 hours prior to the special meeting. The call and notice of the meeting must also specify time and place of the meeting and the specific business to be transacted. No other business may be considered. A board member has the right to waive the the notice requirement by filing a "written waiver of notice" prior to or at the time of the meeting. Such notice is also waived if the member is present.[7] Note the required notification to the media representaive must actually be delivered or received 24 hours in advance. Mailing such notice 24 hours in advance would not necessarily satisfy the legal requirement.[8]

The requirement regarding posting agendas applies to special meetings as well; posting must be made at least 24 hours prior to special meetings. [Education Code Section 35145(6)]

The special notice provisions for landowners are applicable for special meetings also.

Adjourned Meetings

As stated above, regular or special meetings may be adjourned to a later time.[9] In interpreting this section, the Attorney General stated that notice posted near the entrance of the meeting place within 24 hours after adjournment is sufficient.[10] Apparently, however, this notice would, in fact, be insufficient in the limited case of an adjourned regular meeting or regular meeting where no board members were present. In this instance, Gov. Code Section 54955 permits the clerk or secretary to declare the meeting adjourned to a stated time and place and then

requires notice to be given in accordance with the notice provisions governing special meetings; i.e., notice to the media who have requested it and presumably in accordance with the agenda posting requirements outlined above. In any other case of adjournment, notification to the media would not be required and posting of notice near the entrance would be sufficient.

Closed Sessions

A closed session may normally only be conducted during a regular or special meeting, when the meeting has been called with proper notification.[11] However, in limited circumstances (see threat to government buildings and the national security provisions of the Government Code) a regular or special meeting need not precede the holding of a closed session. In addition, the *Lucas v. Armigo Joint Union High School District*[12] case states that a call for a closed session need not appear on the agenda of a regular meeting for a board to properly go into closed session. However, in the case of special, adjourned and continuing meetings, the closed session must appear as part of the notice required for such meetings. Prior to or after any closed session, the board must state the general reason for the closed session, and may cite the legal authority under which the session is held. In the closed session, the board may consider only those matters covered in the statement.[13]

Collective Bargaining

The Educational Employment Relations Act contains its own notice provision, imposing the obligation upon public school employers and exclusive representatives to submit initial proposals relating to matters within the scope of representation to the public at a meeting of the public school employer.[14] The negotiation procedures cannot advance until the public has been informed and has ahd the opportunity to express opinions at a public meeting.[15]

Matters arising after the submission of the initial proposals must be made public and votes taken on such additional matters must be publicly disclosed within 24 hours.[16]

Government Code Section 3547 provides specific guidelines for public disclosure. However, the type of meeting at which action is to be taken or disclosure is to be made would apparently govern. Thus, if disclosure of an initial proposal were to occur at a special meeting, the above mentioned notice provisions for special meetings would apply.

Board Minutes

It is imperative to keep adequate board meeting minutes as they have the status of official legal documents. Courts frequently refer to them as policy on which to decide disputes. In case of litigation, minutes and district policy often are subpoenaed. Minutes of the prior meeting should be duplicated and distributed to the members of the board with the agenda for the next meeting. This practice provides members the opportunity to study the minutes carefully and to retain a copy for their personal files. It also makes it unnecessary to consume board time with an actual reading of the minutes. The minutes may be approved as circulated, or modified and then approved.

The minutes must include a record of each board action. Lengthy discussions may be briefly summarized, but motions should be carefully

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worded before they are accepted and seconded and those motions should appear in the minutes exactly as the board acted upon them. If the length of the complete resolutions or documents makes them impractical for inclusion in the minutes, they should be identified through references, and it should be indicated that they are attached. In order to keep the minutes book from becoming too bulky, contracts, petitions, and lengthy resolutions may be briefly described and identified and placed in files for easy reference. A record of the names of those voting for and against each question should appear in the minutes unless action is unanimous.

At the time of approval by board action, the official copy of the minutes should be signed by the clerk or secretary. A copy of the official minutes should be given or sent to each school, person, etc., who receives copies of the agenda.

Minutes for Regular, Special and Adjourned Meetings

Education Code Section 35145 provides:

> "(M)inutes (must be) taken at all such meetings, recording all action taken by the governing board. Such minutes shall constitute public records, and shall be available to the public. . . "

Also, Education Code Section 35163 requires every official action of the board to be affirmed by a formal vote of the members of the board and kept in a journal.

Minutes of Closed Sessions

Education Code Section 35145 does not require minutes to be kept for closed sessions which are held under Government Code Sections 54957 and 54957.6, nor under Education Code Sections 35146 (student discipline) and 48914 (student expulsion).

If action is taken by the board in closed session under the Education Code sections noted, final action must be taken at a public meeting and the result of such action shall be a public record of the school district.[17]

Proceedings of a closed session under the Government Code sections cited are not of public record, though minutes may be made of the proceedings. Under Government Code Section 54957.2, the board may designate someone to attend the closed sessions for the purpose of keeping and entering in a minutes book a record of topics discussed and decisions made at such meetings. Only the members of the board, or a court of general jurisdiction acting upon an allegation of violation of the Brown Act, have access to the minute book. Again, an official action, even though stemming from a closed session, must be affirmed by the governing board in a public meeting.[18]

The minutes of the board are official legal documents. It is essential that the minutes:

1. Show when and where the meeting was held;
2. Show who was present;
3. Show what was considered;
4. Show exactly what action was taken;
5. Show each motion was adopted by a majority.[19]

Once adopted the official minutes become official. The official minutes constitute public records and must be available to the public.

After the minutes are officially approved by board action, an official

copy should be signed by the clerk or secretary and carefully preserved.

An index should be prepared on at least a fiscal-year basis and bound with the official copies of the minutes for that period. The use of marginal references or topical headings enhances the usefulness of minutes for reference purposes and greatly facilitates their indexing.

Conclusion

Since a violation of the Brown Act could have far-reaching legal effects, including possible criminal prosecution, board members should be careful when conducting meetings. Any time doubt arises as to whether the Brown Act would govern a particular action, it would be wise to contact your county counsel or school attorney for legal advice.

An important rule to remember is that all meetings of a majority of the board of education must be open and public with the exceptions of certain subjects that may be discussed in closed sessions. Such exceptions are specifically defined and strictly construed and any deviation from these exceptions will most likely result in a violation of the Act. Interpretations are generally construed in favor of the public's right to know.

Parliamentary Procedures

The manner in which a board conducts itself at the table influences the way the staff, community, press, and others view the effectiveness and integrity of the board. Well run, efficient meetings are conducive to a feeling of trust and confidence. They demonstrate thoughtful deliberation, sound organization, individual respect, appreciation for personal integrity and many other positive qualities.

Well run meetings are no accident. They are the result of planning —planning which includes knowledge of parliamentary procedures. Many board presidents find consistent use of parliamentary procedures to be their most valuable tool.

As president, take the time to become knowledgeable, discuss procedures with the board and adopt the appropriate policies to implement a method that can assist you and future presidents in accomplishing what at times appears to be an unmanageable task.

The following is a brief outline of parliamentary procedure. Consult Roberts Rules of Order for a more definite guide for correct parliamentary procedure.

Rules of Adoption[20]

Acceptance of Motion. No motion shall be made or recognized until the chairman declares that the chair will accept motions on the subject before the board.

Main Motion. A main motion shall be made in substantially the following form: "I move that . . ." A motion shall be made only by a board member.

Recognition of Motion. A motion is before the board only when recognized by the chairman. The chairman shall recognize a motion by stating substantially the following: "The chair recognizes the motion that . . ."

Out-of-Order Motion. A motion which does not relate to the matter then before the board or which is a main motion and is presented when

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another main motion is still before the board is out-of-order and shall not be recognized.

Second. No motion can be discussed or voted on by board members unless some board member other than the person making the motion has given a second to the motion.

Revision of Motion. At any time before a vote is taken on a motion, the person making the motion may revise the wording of his motion. If the revision is accepted by the person who made the second to the original motion or if the motion as revised receives a second from some other board member, the motion as revised is the motion before the board henceforth. The revised motion shall have substantially the same purpose and effect as the original motion.

Withdrawal of Motion. At any time before a vote is taken on a motion, the person who made the motion may withdraw it. No second is required for withdrawing the motion. If a motion is withdrawn, it is not before the members and no vote can be taken on it. Any other member may make the same or substantially the same motion and it shall be acted on in the same way as any other main motion.

Amendment to Motion. At any time before a vote is taken on a motion, any board member may move to amend the motion which is then before the board. The motion shall state the amendment and shall receive a second before it shall be recognized by the chairman. When recognized by the chairman, the motion to amend is thereafter the business before the board. The chairman shall call for discussion, which shall be limited to the proposed amendment. If the proposed amendment receives a favorable majority, the main motion shall stand amended in accordance with the amendment and further discussion on the main motion shall be to the motion as amended.

Procedural Motion. A procedural motion is a motion which proposes to take some action in relation to the manner in which the board will consider the substance of the main motion. Such a motion may do any of the following:

1. Postpone the consideration of the main motion indefinitely or to a time certain.
2. Refer the subject of the main motion to a committee or person for study or special consideration.
3. Limit discussion or establish special rules governing the discussion on the main motion.
4. Divide the main motion into smaller units for the purposes of discussion, voting or both.

Postponement. If a motion to postpone the consideration of a subject or the consideration of a main motion is adopted, the chairman shall place the subject or the main motion on the agenda in accordance with the terms of the motion without further action by the members. If no time or circumstances are specified for the reinstatement of the subject or the main motion in the motion of postponement, the chairman shall reinstate the subject or the main motion at his discretion without further action by the members but not sooner than the next regular board meeting.

Motion to Adjourn. Any member may move to adjourn a meeting of the board. If the motion receives a second, the meeting shall stand adjourned. No business can be transacted after the second is given. Any

other motions before the board at the time of adjournment shall be deemed to have been withdrawn. The chairman shall determine whether a motion to adjourn is in order and whether it has received a second. His decision shall be final.

Call for the Question. At any time during the discussion on any motion any member may call for the question. If that call receives a second, the chairman shall immediately end the discussion and shall call for the vote on the motion being discussed. No other business shall be conducted until the call is resolved.

Orders of Motions and Procedural Actions. The following order in the presentation of motions and other procedural actions shall be in effect:

1. If there is a main motion before the members, the chairman may recognize one of the following:
   a. Request to revise a motion.
   b. Request to substitute a motion.
   c. Motion to amend the motion.
   d. Procedural motion.
   e. Declaration to terminate discussion.
   f. Call for the question.
   g. Call for a delay of the question.
   h. Motion to adjourn.
2. If a motion to amend the main motion is before the members, the chairman may recognize only one of the following:
   a. Procedural motion.
   b. Declaration to terminate discussion.
   c. Call for the question.
   d. Call for a delay of the question.
   e. Motion to adjourn.
3. If any of the following motions, requests, or calls are before the board, the chairman may recognize only a declaration to terminate discussion or a motion to adjourn until the motion, request, or call is resolved:
   a. Procedural motion.
   b. Request to revise a motion.
   c. Request to substitute a motion.
   d. Call for the question.
   e. Call for a delay of the question.

Discussion. A motion which has been recognized by the chairman shall be open for discussion under the control of the chairman. The discussion shall be solely between board members. Staff and observers may participate only by responding to questions specifically directed to them by board members.

Privilege of Board Member. No board member who is speaking to the board shall be interrupted by any person except by his own consent. If he yields to another person, the chairman shall again recognize that board member immediately at the conclusion of the other person's remarks and the member may continue speaking.

Statements for the Record. Any member may request the secretary to include in the minutes a statement for the record containing his own statements, explanations or other material. Such a statement may be oral or written pages. Such a request shall be made before the adjournment of the meeting into whose minutes the statement is to be

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inserted. A member may request the insertion of more than one statement in each meeting but may not request the insertion of more than one statement on any particular subject or item.

Termination of Discussion. The chairman shall close the discussion when he determines that there has been sufficient discussion to consider all of the relevant factors. Discussion shall be closed if a majority of the board members present so declare, regardless of any action by the chairman.

Quorum. A majority of the number of positions (filled or unfilled) on a school board represents a quorum. A majority of the board is one more than fifty percent of the total board positions. Vacancies on the board do not decrease the number of board positions.

Lack of Quorum. If the chairman determines at any time that there is not a quorum present, he shall do one of the following:

- Declare the meeting recessed until he determines that a quorum is present. A recess declared pursuant to this section is not subject to the provisions of the Government Code.
- Declare the meeting adjourned.

Vote. The vote on all matters shall be made in person and shall be oral. The chairman shall announce the results of the vote immediately thereafter.

Rollcall Vote. Upon the request of any member who was present when the vote on a motion was taken, the chairman shall have the secretary call the roll and each member shall announce his vote when his name is called. Immediately thereafter the chairman shall announce the result. The results of a rollcall vote shall determine the disposition of the motion before the board.

A request for a rollcall vote shall be made before the chairman recognizes any other motion or, if it is on a motion to amend, before the chairman opens the discussion on the main motion as amended.

Abstention. Any member may abstain from voting at any call for the vote. Such a member, who is present at the call for a vote, shall be counted as present for the purpose of determining the presence of a quorum.

Change of Vote. A member may change his vote, if he announces his change of vote before the chairman announces the results of the vote.

Favorable Majority. A motion shall be deemed adopted and an action of the board taken when a majority of the board votes in favor of the motion. Vacancies on the board do not decrease the number on the board.

Defeated Motion. A motion which did not receive a favorable majority is a defeated motion. A tie vote defeats a motion.

Reconsideration. At any time subsequent to the announcement of a vote, either in the same meeting or in any of the two subsequent regular meetings, any member* may move to reconsider the vote. If made during the same meeting as the original vote, the chairman shall recognize the motion at the earliest opportunity in which no other motion is before the board. If the motion is seconded and is supported by a majority of the members voting, the chairman shall place the original question before the board members as the first specified item requiring deliberation on the agenda (if motion to reconsider is made at a subsequent meeting) or the next item of business (if the motion to reconsider is made at the same

meeting) unless those board members in favor of the reconsideration agree to a postponement to a definite time.

No vote shall not be subject to more than one motion to reconsider. A vote on a motion to reconsider itself shall be subject to a motion to reconsider.

Waiver of Rules. Any particular rule of the Rules of Adoption, except those relating to the vote and the rollcall vote, may be waived on the motion of any board member, if approved by a favorable majority. Such a waiver shall be for a limited time and for a limited purpose. The chairman shall be the sole judge of whether a particular motion to waive a rule meets these requirements.

*who voted on the majority side

Footnotes

[1]NSBA Research Report Number 1972-2.
[2]Ibid.
[3]Government Code 54954; Education Code 35145.
[4]Education Code 35145.
[5]*Carlson v. Paradise Unified School District*, (1971) 8 Cal.App. 3d 196, 95 Cal.Rprtr. 650.
[6]Government Code 54954.1.
[7]Government Code 54956; Education Code 35144.
[8]53 Ops. Atty. Gen. 246, (1970).
[9]Government Code 54955.
[10]32 Op. Atty. Gen. 240, (1958).
[11]Government Code 54957.
[12]*Lucas v. Armigo Joint Union High School District*, (1971) 18 Cal. App. 3d 988, 991-992, 96 Cal. Rprtr. 431.
[13]Government Code 54957.7.
[14]Government Code 3547 (a).
[15]Government Code 3547 (b).
[16]Government Code 3547 (d).
[17]Education Code 35146, 48914(g).
[18]Education Code 35163.
[19]A majority of the board is more than fifty percent of the total board positions. Vacancies on the board do not decrease the number of board positions.
[20]This list is incomplete, and is included for illustration only. Consult *Robert's Rules of Order* for a definitive discussion of the Rules of Adoption.

Notes

Backup Materials

Checklist for Improving Meetings[1]

- Spell out the procedures for determining what gets on the agenda. A policy statement is a good place for putting this on paper. Procedures for preparing background materials should be included in this statement.
- Send out information pertinent to the agenda items a couple of days before the meeting. Send it to board members, media people and leaders in the community.
- Board president and superintendent should meet before the meeting, go over the agenda and talk through any problems they can anticipate.
- Work to make the board meeting setting as pleasant as possible.
- Be sure each board member does the required homework before the board meeting.
- Notify the public, press and students about board meetings in an orderly, established way. Post the notice in local newspapers and on school bulletin boards.
- Make sure everyone knows which matters need to be handled by the school board during a regular board meeting.
- Superintendents should speed business by pointing out beforehand which items are accompanied by administrative recommendation. The superintendent should also indicate which agenda items require specific action by the board.
- Boards should encourage staff participation in instances where staff advice could be helpful to the board's work.
- Keep the timing right. Meetings should move along briskly and appear as though they are moving as planned. The president should clarify goals and objectives. The president should summarize arguments before an item is put to a vote.
- The president should stay in command of the meeting, keeping the discussion on the topic at hand.
- After the meeting, someone must inform the public, staff and students about what occurred.
- The board's written policy or bylaws should explain how the board will keep order at its meetings.

[1]Abstracted from NSBA Research Report Number 1976-2

LAS VIRGENES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

30961 West Agoura Road, Westlake Village, CA 91361
Telephone: (213) 889-4004

AGENDA
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
NOVEMBER 12, 1981

TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: District Office

I. CALL TO ORDER
II.FLAG SALUTE
III.APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
V. STAFF/BOARD COMMUNICATIONS
VI. ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR INFORMATION

A. Educational

1. Junior Achievement p. 1
2. National Merit Award Winners p. 2
3. Annual Report on Testing p. 2

VII. HEARING OF DELEGATIONS AND/OR COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

(This item will be placed immediately preceding the coffee break)

VIII. ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR ACTION

A. Consent

1. Gifts p. 4
2. Fund Raiser — Calabasas High p. 8
3. Fund Raiser — Yerba Buena p.8
4. Overnight Field Trips p. 8
5. Agreement — Marine Sciences Program p. 8
6. Subdivision Statement p.8
7. Agreement — Food Processing p. 8
8. Purchase Orders p. 8
9. Warrants p. 22
10. Personnel Document p. 22

B. General

1. Date of December Meeting p. 22
2. LVEA Contract p. 22

C. Educational

D. Business

1. Public Hearing — Dedication of Land p. 24
2. Resolution — Grant of Easement p. 24
3. Award of Bid — Heating/Ventilating/Air-Conditioning p. 24

IX. ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR INFORMATION

A. General

1. Electives for Students Not At Grade Level p. 30
2. Management & Confidential Personnel Salaries 1982 p. 33

B. Business

X. ADJOURNMENT

The following examples are a small selection of the sample policies, bylaws, rules and regulations available from the California School Boards Association through its for-a-fee board policy services.

Contact CSBA at 916 23rd Street, Sacramento, CA 95816 or (916) 443-4691 for more information on the variety of policy services offered and the current price for each of those services.

BB 9121(a)

Bylaws of the Board

President

The president shall preside at all meetings of the Board and shall perform other duties as directed by law, State Department of Education regulations, and the Board. In carrying out these responsibilities, the president shall:

1. Sign out all instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Board;
2. Consult with the Superintendent on the Board's agendas;
3. Appoint all committees, subject to Board approval;
4. Call such meetings of the Board as he/she may deem necessary, giving notice as prescribed by law;
5. Be an *ex-officio* member of all Board committees;
6. Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters which may occur between Board meetings;
7. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all Board meetings.

As presiding officer at all meetings of the Board, the president shall:

1. Call the meeting to order at the appointed time;
2. Announce the business to come before the Board in its proper order.
3. Enforce the Board's policies relating to the order of business and conduct of meetings.
4. Recognize persons who desire to speak, and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference.
5. Explain what the effect of a motion would be if it is not clear with every member.
6. Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Board.
7. Answer all parliamentary inquiries, referring questions of law to the Board attorney.
8. Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.

BB 9121(b)

President

The president shall have all the rights of any member of the Board, including the right to move, second, discuss, and vote on any and all questions before the Board.

In the case of the resignation, absence, or disability of the president, the clerk shall perform the duties of president. In case of the absence or disability of both the president and the clerk, the Board shall choose a president *pro tempore*, who shall perform all the duties of the president.

Legal Reference: Education Code
35022 President of the Board
35143 Annual organizational meetings; dates and notice
35144 Special meetings

7-84

Bylaws of the Board

Meetings

All meetings of the Governing Board, except closed sessions shall be open to the public.
(cf. 9321 - Closed Sessions)

The Governing Board shall adopt a yearly calendar specifying the date, time and place of each regular meeting.

Regular meetings

The Governing Board shall hold ____ regular meetings each month. Regular meetings shall be held at _(time)_ and at the following location, _____.

NOTE: THE GOVERNING BOARD MUST FIX THE TIME AND PLACE FOR ITS REGULAR MEETINGS AS PRESCRIBED BY EDUCATION CODE 35140.

Notice of Regular Meetings

At least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the regular meeting, the agenda shall be posted on the bulletin board of each school, in the district office and at designated public locations.

NOTE: THE FORTY-EIGHT (48) HOUR REQUIREMENT IS PRESCRIBED BY LAW.

Upon request, the local media shall be mailed the annual calendar of regular Board Meetings. Any changes to the calendar shall be mailed prior to the meeting.

Requests must be filed with the Governing Board and shall contain a description of the property. Requests are valid for one year from the date filed and must be renewed yearly. Persons requesting notices shall pay an annual mailing fee. (Government Code Section 54954.1)

The annual mailing fee shall be

NOTE: FILL IN THE CHARGE TO BE LEVIED PERSONS REQUESTING NOTICE OF MEETINGS.

Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Governing Board may be called by the presiding officer or a majority of the members of the Governing Board.

All Governing Board members and the Superintendent shall be notified at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the special meeting. The notice shall contain time, place and the business to be transacted.

NOTE: THE TWENTY-FOUR (24) HOUR REQUIREMENT IS PRESCRIBED BY LAW.

Notice of special meetings will be given to the local media and property owners who have requested such notice in writing. The notice will be given at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting and will include the business to be transacted.

NOTE: DELIVERY OF NOTICES MAY EITHER BE BY MAIL OR DELIVERED PERSONALLY AS PRESCRIBED BY EDUCATION CODE 35144 AND GOVERNMENT CODE 54956. IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH TIME TO GIVE NOTICE BY MAIL, NOTICE MAY BE GIVEN BY TELEPHONE DURING BUSINESS HOURS.

An agenda shall be prepared and delivered with the notice to Governing Board Members. The agenda shall be posted at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting.

NOTE: THE TWENTY-FOUR (24) HOUR REQUIREMENT IS PRESCRIBED BY LAW.

Only those items of business listed in the call for the special meeting shall be considered at that special meeting.

Emergency Special Meeting

The Governing Board may hold a special meeting without complying with the twenty-four (24) hour notice requirement in the case of an emergency situation. An emergency situation means:

1. A work stoppage or other activity which severely impairs public health, safety, or both, as determined by a majority of the members of the Governing Board.
2. A crippling disaster which severely impairs public health, safety, or both, as determined by a majority of the members of the Governing Board.

The president of the Board or designee shall give notice of the emergency special meeting to the local media by telephone one hour before the meeting. If telephone services are not functioning the notice requirement of one hour is waived. As soon after the meeting as possible the Governing Board shall notify the local media that the meeting was held, the purpose of the meeting and any action taken by the Board.

NOTE: THE ONE HOUR REQUIREMENT IS PRESCRIBED BY LAW.

No closed session may be held during an emergency special meeting. All other rules governing special meetings shall be observed with the exception of the twenty-four (24) hour notice.

The minutes of the meeting, a list of the persons the president or designee notified or attempted to notify, a copy of the roll call vote, and any actions taken at such meeting shall be posted for a minimum of ten (10) days in a public place as soon after the meeting as possible. (Government Code 54956.5)

Adjourned Meetings

A majority vote by the Governing Board may adjourn any meeting to a later time and place which shall be specified in the order of adjournment. Within twenty-four (24) hours after the meeting has been adjourned a copy of the order of adjournment shall be posted at the site of the meeting.

If no members are present at any regular or adjourned regular meeting, the secretary or the clerk may declare the meeting adjourned and shall give notice in the same manner required for special meetings. (Government Code 54955)

Annual Organizational Meeting

The Governing Board shall hold an annual organizational meeting. The organizational meeting shall be held within the time limits prescribed by Education Code 35143.

At this meeting the Governing Board shall:

1. Elect a clerk and a president from its members and appoint a secretary to the Governing Board.

NOTE: IN CERTAIN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICTS THE SUPERINTENDENT IS THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNING BOARD. (EDUCATION CODE 35034)

2. Authorize signatures.
3. Develop a schedule of regular meetings for the year.
4. Develope a calendar of topics for the year.

NOTE: A CALENDAR OF TOPICS WOULD INCLUDE SUCH MATTERS AS THE EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT, BUDGET MEETINGS, GOAL SETTING, ETC.

Agenda/Meeting Materials

Construction of Agenda

The secretary of the Governing Board in cooperation with the president of the Board, shall prepare an agenda for each regular meeting. Governing Board Members may place any item on the agenda no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the legally required public posting of the agenda.

NOTE: IT IS OUR RECOMMENDATION THAT IN DISTRICTS WHERE THE SUPERINTENDENT IS NOT THE BOARD SECRETARY, HE/SHE SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN PREPARING THE AGENDA.

Any member of the public may request that a matter directly related to school district business be placed on the agenda of a regular meeting subject to the following conditions:

1. The request must be in writing and be submitted to the Governing Board secretary with supporting documents and information, if any, at least five (5) school days prior to the legally required public posting of the agenda.
2. The Governing Board secretary shall be the sole judge of whether the request is or is not a matter directly related to school district business.
3. No matter which is by law a proper subject for consideration in closed session will be accepted under this provision.
4. The Governing Board may place limitations on the total time to be devoted to the matter at any meeting, and may limit the time allowed for any one person to speak on the matter at that meeting. (cf. 1120 — Governing Board Meetings)

This provision does not prevent the Board from taking testimony at regular meetings on matters which are not on the agenda which a member of the public may wish to bring before the Board. The Board shall not take action on such matters at that meeting.

NOTE: IN CERTAIN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICTS, THE BOARD SECRETARY IS THE SUPERINTENDENT (EDUCATION CODE 35034). OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAY EITHER HAVE A BOARD MEMBER BE SECRETARY OR MAY EMPLOY A PERSON NOT A MEMBER OF THE BOARD TO FULFILL CERTAIN DUTIES PRESCRIBED BY LAW. (EDUCATION CODE 35025, 35250)

Posting of Agenda

At least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the time of all regular meetings an agenda shall be posted on each school's bulletin board, in the district office, and at such public place or places where member of the public may view it. The agenda for a special meeting shall be posted at least twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting in the same locations. (cf. 1120 — Governing Board Meetings)

Initiating Requests for Staff Reports

Requests for research or administrative studies, desired by one or more Board Members, shall be submitted to the Governing Board for consideration. If approved, the Board shall direct the Superintendent to make such studies. Individual members shall confer directly with the Superintendent if specific information is desired or if information is needed regarding a complaint or request from a citizen.

Advance Delivery of Meeting Materials

A copy of the agenda shall be forwarded to each Board Member not less than seventy-two (72) hours prior to a regular meeting, with the Superintendent's report, minutes to be approved, copies of communications, reports from committees, staff, citizens and others, and such other documents and exhibits which are available and pertinent to the meeting.

NOTE: WE RECOMMEND THE SEVENTY-TWO HOUR TIMELINE TO ALLOW BOARD MEMBERS ENOUGH TIME TO REVIEW THE AGENDA AND RELATED MATERIALS PRIOR TO THE MEETING.

Board members shall become familiar with the agenda and support materials prior to the meeting, and shall obtain any additional information that may be necessary to make well-informed decisions.

The secretary and president are directed to make every effort to get support materials and the agenda for special meetings to the Board Members at the earliest possible time after the meetings are called, and except in emergency situations as permitted in law, at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the time the meetings are called. (cf. 9320 — Meetings)

Legal Reference: **Education Code**

35144 **Special meetings**
35145 **Public meetings**
35145.5 **Right of public to place matters directly related to school district business on agenda**

Government Code

54956.5 **Special meetings, emergencies**
54957.5 **Public records**

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Chapter 3.
Board Communications

Effective communication is widely recognized as an essential element of good leadership and management. Regardless of the size of your district or county office, whatever its condition or situation, each board needs a variety of ways to communicate with its staff and community.

No single effort or approach can accomplish a sufficient flow of information and ideas. Sufficient priority must be given this area to assure that it is addressed and completed effectively. It might very well serve as one component in the evaluation of the board and superintendent. A district policy is the usual vehicle to ensure:

1. A responsible communications policy shared with, and understood by, the school community and district staff.
2. A brochure and/or other handouts for public board meetings which include, for example, legal requirements of the board and the superintendent's office, meeting dates and times, and how the public may address the board. (Examples are included at the end of this section.)
3. A newsletter to provide staff and parents with an opportunity to better understand board/superintendent business and operations.
4. Guidelines and established responsibility for on-going and regular communication with the news media and/or parents. The CSBA publication, ***How To Work With The Media***, provides practical guidelines.
5. A communications system that will provide responsive feedback between the board and its various publics.
6. An annual report to be provided to the community explaining the school district's programs, services and progress.
7. Periodic reports made to the board describing what is being done at both the district and school level to communicate with the parents, staff and students.

The board should authorize a person to act as spokesperson for the board. It is often the board president or superintendent. But the spokesperson can also be a professional hired by the board to act as its media relations advisor and spokesperson. No district employee should issue press releases on topics that are of high board interest without their prior knowledge. Board members do not like to read in the newspaper about events of which they had no prior knowledge. This applies to events scheduled for the next board meeting or regular occurrences within the district or county. The board should give clear, direct guidance in this area to the superintendent.

Improving communications is never easy; it is frustrating and never ending, a job to begin and once begun — continued. The following steps[1] could serve as a beginning:

1. Review your communication policy. A good communication policy provides guidelines and implies authorization to implement a

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school-community relations program. It also:

(a) Gives direction on how you communicate between school personnel and the public.

(b) Signifies interest by the board and encourages communication throughout the school district staff.

(c) Establishes official recognition of the need to maintain two-way communications between school district and community.

2. Use your policy review to encourage the board and administrative staff to examine current communication practices and procedures, and proceed with recommended changes or additions.

(a) Based on this review, the board can determine the chief spokesperson for the board — either you as president, another member of the board or the superintendent.

(b) Such a review should allow the board to determine its operating procedures and initiate self-analysis of board image and your leadership role.

3. Following board review of policy, determine action programs to improve communication for you as the board president, other members of the board, the administrative staff and all other employees.

(a) Communication is a management function. That is, good school management requires that communication to all constituents be a necessary part of having a sound school system. A year-round communications program is not a "frill." It can be justified as a long-term benefit for students. Consequently, schools have a requirement not only to provide service and education, but they have an equal mandate to communicate how, what, why, when and where about these programs.

(b) Communication and school-community relations, to be effective, must be disciplined and systematic.

(c) School communications must be carefully planned, directed and evaluated. They need to be an integral part of system objectives, programs, budgets and priorities.

4. Develop and implement goals for your communications program. Goals are general policy statements of system direction. Objectives describe specific results to be achieved at a given time. Objectives are developed annually, can be achieved and are measurable. Note the difference between general goals and specific objectives in the following process example:

(a) GOAL: The board adopts an informational goal to provide internal constituents with information about school board goals, policies, programs, operations and planning.

(b) OBJECTIVES: (Stated annually in terms of specific, attainable and measurable objectives.) Publish and distribute "School Board Review," which briefly covers all board meetings, to the staff and key community advisors.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION: Based on given resources, this publication should be written by staff and the method of distribution determined. Mailing lists, costs and budget requirements should be carefully reviewed.

(d) EVALUATION: Surveys or interviews with readers should be one means to determine its usefulness. Other such factors as budget will be included. The administration should review the

program with the board.

5. Consider these examples of communications programs specifically for you, in your role as board president. They may be related to other members of the board or involve a joint effort of the board president, the superintendent and his/her staff.
   (a) Seek public service time for a weekly radio program; for example, "Your School Board is Listening."
   (b) Set up a series of speaking engagements to various community groups.
   (c) Arrange for "Second Cup of Coffee" programs for employees to meet with you in an informal setting. (Plan a meeting in each building cafeteria serving coffee and rolls and allowing for open discussion.)
   (d) Set up interviews with news media for feature stories on all board members.
   (e) Provide for administration/board retreats.
   (f) Provide good board meeting environment.
   (g) Provide for special reports, films, slide-tape presentations at designated board meetings.
   (h) Invite special groups to have representatives attend board meetings. Also consider meeting informally with such groups.
   (i) Provide for reasonable guidelines to appear before the board and present information.
   (j) Consider a school management newsletter for the board and administrative staff. (Capsuled background on legislation, labor board rulings, school law, etc.) A great deal of good information can be abstracted from material you receive from CSBA. Or, you can subscribe to CSBA's newsletter service available at four levels and four different prices. Contact CSBA for more information.
   (k) Examine working relationship between the board and news media. The CSBA publication, *How To Work With the Media* is an excellent source.
   (l) Consider a tape-slide presentation of the board, including how it operates based on school code and local policies; profiles of board members; and a review of schools in action. CSBA's slide/tape program or filmstrip, "*Your Local School Board*" can be the basis for a local production or can serve as a supplement.
   (m) Consider developing printed board brochure for handout at board meetings. (Cover most of the items above.)
   (n) Provide for and give leadership to continuous school board training and inservice.
   (o) Arrange for yourself and board members to have lunch at various buildings.
   (p) Seek local newspaper cooperation in developing a question-and-answer column on various aspects of the schools.
   (q) Consider short information statements on all agenda items for better communication with patrons attending board meetings.

Board President/Superintendent Relations

An effective working relationship is essential between the superintendent, the board president and the board. The board works more closely with the superintendent than with any other staff member

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employed by the school district. How effectively they work together determines in large part how well the entire educational program will be planned and executed.

A key element in an effective working relationship is open, direct communication. How does it happen? What method will be used? How much do you and the other board members want to know, and about what things? The answers to these questions can best be achieved by meetings between the entire board and the superintendent. The two parties must decide on how the superintendent will communicate with the board and what procedures the board members will use in communicating with the superintendent. In your role as board president, you will have to devote many hours and a great deal of effort to bring this about. Helpful information is contained in the publication *Board/ Superintendent Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships*, which can be ordered from the CSBA office.

Board/Superintendent Communication

Board presidents require special communication with the superintendent because they must work together in determining:

1. The items on the forthcoming agenda
2. The sequence of events on the agenda
3. Approximately how much time each item will take
4. What action is necessary by the board for each item on the agenda
5. At what point the superintendent will be recognized
6. What kinds of reports the superintendent will be giving the board
7. How the superintendent intends to use staff members or outside consultants during the meeting
8. How to handle emergency situations that might arise
9. How to deal with special interest and/or pressure groups

These items and many more require you to be in continual communication with the superintendent. It must be understood by all board members that communication between the superintendent and you is going to occur and the purpose of the meetings, phone calls and/or written messages.

A Position of Trust[2]

"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall,
All the king's horses
And all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty
Together again."

The relationship between a superintendent and a school board might be likened to this rhyme. When a superintendent is selected by a school board, he or she is placed in a position of trust (upon a wall), and the board should trust its choice. In point of fact, that trust may be the most important thing the superintendent has going for him or her.

The superintendent's job is to maintain and build upon the expectations placed in him or her. Although outside factors beyond the control of anyone may have influence upon the success of the superintendent, most failures are due to either a poor initial choice by a board which didn't understand its task in the first place, or to the

superintendent's failure to build and maintain trust between him or herself and the board.

How does the superintendent keep from falling off the wall? I believe "wall hanging on-ness" can be described in four elements, all closely related:

- Planning
- Communications
- Decision-Making
- Evaluation

Planning

A positive board/superintendent relationship is easier to maintain when the district is well-managed. Effective management is directly related to the success of the plans and systems established in the district. The superintendent and his or her staff must plan continually. Some plans cover a five-year period while others cover a single occurrence.

When a problem occurs more than once, a plan should be developed for handling that problem when it arises again. This plan will probably be described in an administrative regulation or a board policy. When a system works well, it is delegated to someone who is paid less than the superintendent, and the superintendent then spends his or her time in making and revising other systems.

Communications

When the superintendent steps into his/her role, the nature of his/her job makes him/her privy to a barrage of information from all directions. He/she can choose either to be a ***gatekeeper*** who restricts the information flow or a ***facilitator*** who makes information flow freely.

You would be absolutely amazed at the volume of material from outside the system which is directed to the attention of the superintendent. The superintendent must sort the wheat from the chaff and direct what is important to the board. If the superintendent has organized a communications system, he/she also receives a regular flow of information from within the system. His/her job is to determine what is significant and keep the board well informed. One method is to organize the relevant material into a bulletin which relays short summaries of what is important.

In addition to providing written material, the superintendent should phone board members. When serious problems arise, board members should be contacted as quickly as possible. If board members must hear "bad" news, it is best they hear it from the superintendent.

To communicate everything to every board member is difficult and time consuming, but try to do so with the board president. The board president probably hears more about what is going on than does the superintendent's spouse.

Informal face-to-face contact is extremely important, and the superintendent should schedule periodic visits with all of the board members. It might be lunch with one, a chat over the store counter with another, or a motorcycle ride with the third — although it is a little difficult to communicate in the latter situation. Such frequent contacts will maintain good relationships and reduce misunderstandings and are well worth the time invested.

One school of thought is that board members should communicate with the staff ***only*** through the superintendent, but this is not good

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practice. It encourages autocratic administrative leadership and laziness among school board members. Board members should visit schools, serve on committees, and become familiar with all aspects of the school program.

The informational networks or grapevines available to board members are different from those of the superintendent, and they can use those networks to help the superintendent know what is going on. Board members have a responsibility equal to that of the superintendent to keep him/her informed of relevant complaints — and compliments. I know of one board member who keeps a running log of comments and systematically relays them to the superintendent.

Decision-Making

Decision-making is an ongoing process, with board meetings serving as checkpoints along the way. Those decisions which are made should not be viewed as simple solutions to one-time problems, but recognized as being connected to various plans which have been adopted or are continually under consideration. For example, the final adoption of a budget is the culmination of a series of small decisions which have been made over several months and which will determine next year's spending pattern in the district.

In our district, we use an ongoing process of revising and updating board policies as a mechanism for reviewing board philosophy and decision-making in all areas of the educational program. Through this process a board can provide direction for the operation of the district.

To help the board prepare for making decisions, the superintendent should provide members with adequate background materials. When the decision is made, the board should express it clearly and provide enough direction so that the superintendent can proceed with confidence. This kind of board leadership is important in maintaining a good board/superintendent relationship.

Evaluation

Board/superintendent evaluation is an important ingredient in the overall operation of the district, a method by which the board determines whether the district is going in the direction intended.

In the Mendocino Unified School District, we have tried to establish a system whereby the board and the superintendent have two formal evaluation sessions: one in the fall wherein the superintendent presents his goals and objectives for the year, and a follow-up conference in the spring to again discuss goals and assess the extent to which the objectives have been achieved.

These discussions are scheduled in an executive session in the evening with nothing else on the agenda. The board evaluates the superintendent and the superintendent evaluates the board.

There are many different techniques for conducting evaluation sessions. The critical element in such sessions is that the discussion should be conducted in an open and honest manner. Criticisms should be constructive and should be accompanied with specific suggestions for improvement. The sessions should end on a positive note.

Conclusion

There is no pat recipe for building mutually-supportive relationships between a superintendent and a board. Humpty Dumpty will lose his

equilibrium when board members and superintendents stop talking openly and honestly, when ulterior motives begin to affect decisions, and when mistrust begins to arise between and among the parties. A positive relationship occurs when all parties concerned work hard to make it happen. It is easier to keep the egg from getting broken than it is to glue the pieces back together again.

Getting Along[3]

When I began to collect my thoughts to prepare for this talk, I realized something rather surprising and a little distressing. I realized that I had changed my way of being a board member during the two plus years since I took office. I sat down with a pile of notes from workshops, old memos I had written, letters to fellow board members, and campaign statements. As I read them over, I saw that I was once more active, more idealistic, and more assertive than I am now. Here is a quote from a campaign speech I made a little over two years ago:

> It is generally said that the superintendent advises the board, the board then makes policy, and the superintendent puts the policies into effect. However, I find this formula a little too general to be very helpful, and I think it suggests too passive a role for the board.
>
> If the board deals only with what is put before it by the superintendent, then the board is totally dependent on him for its direction. If the superintendent overlooks an important problem, the board overlooks it too. If I am elected to the board, I expect I will feel far too responsible to depend almost entirely on someone else to prevent me from making a mistake. Therefore, I think the board must take an active role, not merely a passive one, in operating the schools. I think each board member should attempt to maintain a broad overview of current operations in the district. Clearly, the board will depend on the superintendent to gather data, and it will look to him for advice and direction but, at the same time, it is important that some of its direction come from among its own members.

I still believe what I said back then. And yet I think that I, and my fellow board members too, have slipped into the more passive role, too often simply following the superintendent's lead, more and more inclined to think that things are the way they are because they have to be.

Partnership and Passivity

I thought about this change, and decided that it is an almost inevitable result of the working relationship between the board and the superintendent. Board members — especially board presidents — spend a lot of time with the superintendent. They confer together, think together, decide things together. After a year or so on the board, assuming basic harmony, a trustee is likely to come to feel like a colleague or a partner of the superintendent, almost like a part of the administrative team rather than the *employer* of the superintendent and the representative of the people.

There is a good side to this. As the feeling of partnership grows, so does the feeling of trust and mutual respect which is so essential to any kind of productive board/superintendent relationship. However, there is a bad side to this growing feeling of partnership, one that can have unfortunate results if it is not recognized. As the feeling of partnership grows, the will to question the superintendent's assumptions and assertations decreases. The partner-board member wants to cooperate,

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to support, to understand, and to avoid conflict. Presenting a united front to the public begins to feel very important.

The result is a more and more passive board. A passive board cannot, I think, provide genuine educational leadership. What, for example, does the phrase "the board makes policies" mean if the board is too often simply adopting the superintendent's policies? How can a passive-partner board genuinely represent the public when what the public wants may well not be what the superintendent wants? How can a board which acts more like a partner than an employer effectively evaluate the superintendent?

Self Evaluation

A school board — and again, particularly a school board president — which enjoys a harmonious relationship with its superintendent needs to find ways to maintain a balance, or a tension, between cooperation and critical analysis. Board members must try to foster harmony while at the same time remaining active and assertive leaders. This is not easy, as I have discovered in my own realization of change in my two years as a trustee. I think that a periodic pause for reflection and review, both by individual board members — as I found myself doing in preparing for this talk — and by the board as a whole is one way to keep from drifting too far from our ideal.

A day-long summer workshop is also a good idea, where the board takes a deliberate look at itself, says in effect, "How are we doing?" and "How can we be more effective?" The board president should both initiate the process of self-evaluation for the board and plan such a workshop. The superintendent should be a participant, but should not be given the uncomfortable responsibility of leadership.

Here are five specific points board members might look at in evaluating their relationship with the superintendent:

1. Maintain a good working relationship with your superintendent, one based on trust and mutual respect, but be wary of becoming his or her good friend, in a social sense. This sounds harsh, but I think it's important. Not only will you lose all your objectivity if you are the superintendent's good friend, you will lose the confidence of the staff and the public.

2. Question the superintendent's ideas and his recommendations. First do your homework so you won't ask questions out of ignorance, and then insist — in a direct and friendly manner — both in private conversations and in discussions during meetings that he or she show you the reasons behind his/her recommendations. If board members make a habit of posing questions, the superintendent will make a habit of being thorough. Both board members and the superintendent should be willing to have a genuine dialogue in public. In fact, I think it's important for the public to see this happen.

3. Have the courage to *disagree* with your superintendent if, *after both of your best efforts*, you find you simply do not agree. When the board/superintendent relationship is a healthy one, a certain amount of conflict will be seen, not as a problem, but as an expression of honest conviction. Recently, in our district, we faced a controversial issue — whether to bring some private school children into the district under an independent study program. Several hundred people came to the meeting. They were about ninety percent *for* the issue; the superintendent,

after long deliberation and with some reluctance, recommended against it; the board, after a lengthy discussion, voted for it three to two. Each of us explained the reasons for our vote, as the superintendent had explained the reason for his recommendation. Members of the audience did not perceive our vote of one of no confidence in the superintendent *or* as a sign of internal squabbling among board members. Rather, they saw six people — five trustees and one superintendent — struggling with a difficult decision, listening to each other, respecting each other, and then acting firmly and thoughtfully.

4. Maintain contact with the public. Don't stir up trouble with inappropriate comments or divisive gossip, but try to encourage people to talk to you. Be a listener. Help people find the most effective ways to approach the school district — to visit a teacher, see a principal, come to a board meeting, join a committee, see the superintendent. If you keep an ear tuned to this public, you will remember that you are its representative. You will see your schools from a variety of perspectives, and you will counter the tendency to drift into a partner role with your superintendent.

5. Evaluate your superintendent regularly and formally. In our district we have a formal, written evaluation in the fall and a follow-up evaluation in the spring. We do this in executive session and we take as much time as we need, because this particular part of the board's job is such an important one. No one else evaluates the superintendent. The school staff and the public *depend* on the board to provide the district with an effective leader. The process of evaluating your superintendent, the man or woman you work with so closely, is a difficult one. One is tempted to focus on strong points, or to camouflage problems by talking about "goal setting." By making the evaluation a formal event, by taking it seriously, and taking plenty of time, a board is forced into the thick of it, where problems can be discussed frankly and noted carefully. In doing this, a board affirms its intention to act as *employer*, to act in truth as the public's trustee.

Active Role

The active role I am advocating for a board takes a great deal more time than the passive one. The posture of critical analysis, keeping open the option to disagree, initiating new directions in educational policy — these things cannot be undertaken lightly. An active, aggressive board member must be extremely well-informed *and* must have established a relationship of trust with the superintendent. This means giving plenty of time to board homework, and it means giving careful consideration to the superintendent's opinions, positions, and predicaments, both in discussions with him or her and in reflection.

I think board presidents have a particular responsibility to take an *active* role and to lead the way in keeping the rest of the board self-critical and alert to the danger of getting along *too* well with their superintendents.

Footnotes

[1]The five steps are abstracted from the January-February 1974 issue of the Pennsylvania School Boards Journal.

[2]"On the Wall," by Don Kirkpatrick, *California School Boards* journal, October/November 1979.

[3]"The Trouble With Getting Along With Your Superintendent," by Sue Winn, *California School Boards* journal, October/November 1979.

Notes

Backup Materials

The forms on the following pages are provided to board presidents to aid boards in setting priorities for their superintendents.

Status of the District

Directions:

1. Each board member should independently mark each item. A "1" would indicate an area of highest priority to you —major additional effort needs to be dovoted to this, while a "2" would be an area requiring additional effort — do something more than is presently being done. A "3" would represent a lower priority task — enough is being done, but keep on top of it, and a "4" means the lowest priority — stop concentrating major effort in this area.
2. The superintendent should also indicate what the priorities should be. The superintendent should be encouraged to involve other staff members in developing recommended priorities.
3. Based on the responses of each board member and the superintendent, the board should decide their consensus opinion on what the priority items of the superintendent should be and make any modifications the board deems necessary. Because of the sensitive nature of evaluation, boards may wish to discuss some elements in executive session.
4. In executive session, if necessary, explain the thinking of the board to the superintendent. Ask the superintendent to prepare specific objectives with a timeline for completing the various high priority projects. In this way, the board will be setting up "success criteria" for a fair and reasonable evaluation. This is critical and should be done at the beginning of the evaluation period.
5. The board should take formal action to approve the set of objectives to be used as the basis for evaluation.

In working with the priority worksheets, you will note the comprehensiveness of the items. Care should be taken by the board in establishing a reasonable workload for the superintendent in any given year.

At the end of the evaluation period, the board should have objective, measurable evidence to show satisfactory completion of the mutualy agreed-upon success criteria, and should once again use a four-part rating scale to assess how well the tasks were completed.

A sample evaluation schedule might include:

— Objectives completed and approved by the board by October 1.
— Report to the public on progress by June 1.
— Executive session evaluation of superintendent by June 15.
— Board action for any modifications of superintendent's contract by July 1.

STATUS OF THE DISTRICT

Mark your individual priorities in the appropriate left-hand side column. After completion, the summary of board member responses can be summarized in the right-hand column.

Remember, use ratings as follows in planning priorities:

1 — Highest priority — major additional effort needs to be devoted to this
2 — Area requiring additional effort — do something more than is presently being done
3 — Lower priority task — enough is being done, but keep on top of it
4 — Lowest priority — stop concentrating major effort in this area

YOUR CHOICE					BOARD'S DECISION			
1	2	3	4	*ORGANIZATION FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DISTRICT*	1	2	3	4
—	—	—	—	1. A plan for the administrative organization and structure of the entire school district has been devised which shows lines of responsibility and relationships. It provides for present and future needs of the district, and the board, superintendent, and staff are well informed concerning it.	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	2. There is a written statement which outlines the expectations of the board in regard to the role of the superintendent in relation to staff, community, and instructional program.	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	3. A policy exists which provides for consideration of promotion of personnel within the district as well as recruiting from outside the district.	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	4. The roles and responsibilities of staff members have been outlined.	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	5. The present administrative assignments encourage harmonious relationships among various segments of the school system.	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	6. There are regularly-scheduled meetings of the superintendent and the administrative staff.	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	7. Provision exists for direct two-way communication between central administration and the teaching and classified staff.	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	8. A detailed budget is provided for the administration and supervision of the entire certificated and classified staff.	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	9. Provision is made for periodic evaluation of the certificated and classified staff.	—	—	—	—

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
___ ___ ___ ___	10. Assignments of teachers to grade and/or subject matter are based upon their competency to instruct at the assigned grade level and/or particular subject field.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	11. Custodial and maintenance staff exists for the maintenance of school facilities as a part of the environment conducive to learning.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	12. The business functions of the district are performed by qualified personnel.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	13. Clerical help is provided to relieve professional staff of non-professional functions.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	14. Inservice training for employees is provided.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	15. An affirmative action policy, which applies to all employees, has been adopted.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	16. An acceptable grievance policy has been adopted.	___ ___ ___ ___

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

___ ___ ___ ___	1. The community, students, administrators, teachers and other staff are involved in developing and updating the philosophy, goals, and objectives at the district level and at each school site.	___ ___ ___ ___
	2. Written board policy exists on the subject of:	
___ ___ ___ ___	a. Educational philosophy, goals, and objectives.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	b. Teaching of controversial issues.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	c. The selection of instructional materials.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	d. The review of instructional materials, the use of which has been questioned by any individual or group.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	e. Evaluation of programs and students on a periodic basis at the school district and site levels.	___ ___ ___ ___
	3. Time is provided at board meetings for the discussion of curriculum and instruction, including:	
___ ___ ___ ___	a. Planning.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	b. Implementation.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	c. Evaluation of programs.	___ ___ ___ ___

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
___ ___ ___ ___	4. There is a plan for keeping the community informed concerning the program of instruction and plans for its improvement.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	5. The district has designated an individual to provide a leadership role in the development and improvement of the instructional program.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	6. Provision is made for staff involvement in the continuous development and improvement of the program of instruction.	___ ___ ___ ___
	7. The budget makes provision for the improvement of the instructional program through:	
___ ___ ___ ___	a. Adequate funds for supplies and instructional aids.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	b. Teacher participation in curriculum revision by released time and/or compensation for extra time spent.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	c. Provision for instituting pilot studies of experimental courses and new teaching techniques.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	d. Provision for consultant services, when necessary.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	e. Provision for library services.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	f. Provision for media center.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	8. The curriculum requirements of the Education Code have been met and/or exceeded.	___ ___ ___ ___
	9. Provision is made for the continuous appraisal and evaluation of the instructional program in terms of the district's goals and objectives through use of some of the following methods:	
___ ___ ___ ___	a. A testing program which measures pupil achievement.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	b. Accreditation of secondary schools by appropriate accreditation agencies.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	c. Professional consultants from outside the district.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	d. Reports on graduates' performances.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	e. Analysis of dropout rates and causes.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	f. Trend analysis by subject area and grade level for each school site.	___ ___ ___ ___
	10. Provision is made for improving the quality of teaching through:	
___ ___ ___ ___	a. Inservice training based on district and staff needs.	___ ___ ___ ___

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
___ ___ ___ ___	b. Analysis of the district's ability to recruit teachers.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	c. Analysis of the reasons for teacher and administrator turnover.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	d. Analysis of teacher and administrator assignment in conformance with competency.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	11. There is a planned program to effect coordination of the instructional program between various grade levels and between elementary, high school, and college levels (vertical articulation), and between the various disciplines at the same grade level (horizontal articulation).	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	12. A system has been devised for the governing board to establish educational program priorities.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	13. The governing board has established standards of expected student achievement at each grade level in each area of study.	___ ___ ___ ___

RESPONSIVENESS TO EACH LEARNER'S NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS

___ ___ ___ ___	1. Provision is made for instructional process appropriate to the individual learner.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	2. Alternative educational programs are available to students.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	3. There is joint educational planning and evaluation by the teacher, student and parent.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	4. Periodic student-teacher-parent conferences are held.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	5. Students are granted and practice the fundamental rights which are expressed in the Constitution and laws.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	6. An environment which maximizes student motivation for learning and individual expression has been established.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	7. Students and parents are guaranteed access to the individual student's personal records.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	8. Parent visitation and assistance to the instructional staff at school is encouraged.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	9. Administrators and staff initiate and invite home-school contacts, and provide opportunities for parent input.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	10. There is clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the home as it relates to the school and the instructional program.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	11. Each school provides a climate of caring, trust, and respect for all students.	___ ___ ___ ___

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
___ ___ ___ ___	12. There is evidence of school-community cohesiveness, as well as continuous academic and social growth for the student.	___ ___ ___ ___

EMPLOYEE AND PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

	1. Written policy and/or collective agreements exist concerning both certificated and classified staff regarding:	
___ ___ ___ ___	a. Salaries and fringe benefits.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	b. Leaves of absence.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	c. Attendance at education conferences.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	d. Evaluation of performance.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	2. Employees are involved in the formulation of policies which directly concern them.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	3. Board policies and/or collective agreements are readily available to each member of the staff.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	4. Communication has been established between the superintendent and all employees and/or employee units.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	5. Provision is made for the complaints of employees to be heard and subsequent action to be taken through either a formal grievance procedure and/or an administrative review of nongrievable items.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	6. Employee representation within the range of the law is encouraged and welcomed at board meetings.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	7. Written personnel records are kept for all members of the staff.	___ ___ ___ ___
	8. Pupil personnel services are provided for students and complete and usable permanent records are kept in the areas of:	
___ ___ ___ ___	a. Attendance and welfare.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	b. Counseling and guidance.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	c. Health.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	d. A comprehensive testing and evaluation program.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	e. The names of persons to be contacted in the event of a student accident or other emergency.	___ ___ ___ ___

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
	PERSONNEL	
___ ___ ___ ___	1. An active program for personnel recruitment exists including affirmative action that provides a competent, well-balanced staff.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	2. A systematic check is made of the reference of final candidates for vacancies or prospective vacancies.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	3. Interviews are conducted for top applicants for key positions, such as principals or assistant superintendents, before recommending them to the board for appointment.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	4. The best candidate, regardless of race, creed, sex, age, physical handicap, or national origin, is recommended for employment.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	5. A systematic and uniform evaluation of all nontenure teachers is conducted.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	6. A systematic evaluation of tenure teachers is conducted by administrators.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	7. Advice and assistance and a reasonable opportunity for improvement, within the limitations imposed by the law, are provided to all teachers receiving an unsatisfactory evaluation.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	8. In accordance with the law, uniform procedures exist for dismissal or reassignment of any employee, tenure or probationary, who has been evaluated as unsatisfactory after the employee has been given assistance and an opportunity to improve but still fails to meet the standards of the district.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	9. District administrators have demonstrated judgment in recommending candidates for employment.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	10. A written record of the job performance of every teacher who leaves the system is placed on file to be used as the basis for an official resource for reference requests.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	11. An inservice program exists for continuing growth and professional development of teachers and principals that encourage improvement.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	12. The district staff is provided adequate resources.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	13. The district's administrators accept ultimate responsibility for their staff's decisions and performance.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	14. Training is provided for new leaders to replace principals and other key staff members who may retire or leave.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	15. District administrators have provided for their own temporary replacement in case of emergency.	___ ___ ___ ___

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
___ ___ ___ ___	16. Administrators have the confidence and respect of their staff.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	17. Administrators avoid frequent overriding of subordinates.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	18. A systematic evaluation exists for all principals, other administrators, and nonteaching professionals by appropriate administrators.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	19. District administrators are available to staff and private citizens alike within the limitations imposed by their complex duties.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	20. A team spirit exists among the staff in their approach to educational problems.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	21. Open adequate lines of communication exist with the staff.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	22. An appeals procedure, without penalty, has been established for each level of decision-making.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	23. Appropriate arrangements exist for meeting and negotiating with employee representatives.	___ ___ ___ ___

SCHOOL PLANT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

___ ___ ___ ___	1. School facilities are adequate to meet student enrollment and to provide an environment conducive to learning.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	2. There is evidence of long-range planning for new sites and facilities where needed.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	3. A plan has been developed for the acquisition of sites as needed.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	4. Recognition has been given to the need for sufficient administrative personnel to keep abreast of the changes taking place in school design and construction in accordance with the educational needs of the district.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	5. Educational specifications are prepared by the district staff in accordance with the educational philosophy of the district and the policies of the board to guide the architect.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	6. The staff is involved in the plans for new facilities.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	7. The board reviews the plans of the architect at various stages in their development.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	8. School plants are well maintained by the staff.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	9. School plants are efficiently utilized by the staff.	___ ___ ___ ___

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
___ ___ ___ ___	10. There is a planned program of preventive maintenance.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	11. In planning, consideration should be given to architectural barriers and "attractive hazards."	___ ___ ___ ___

BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

___ ___ ___ ___	1. The current income of the district meets the needs of the total program.	___ ___ ___ ___
	2. The business functions of the district are efficiently managed:	
___ ___ ___ ___	a. The purchase and delivery of supplies is efficient and provides materials for instruction and plant maintenance when needed.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	b. Accounting procedures are in line with recommended accounting practices.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	c. Control over expenditures is safe-guarded.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	1. Funds of the district are committed only by the board of education.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	2. A system of requisitions and purchase orders is used for all purchasing.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	3. Information regarding the system is made available to all employees and deviation from the established procedure is not tolerated.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	3. Management of the business affairs of the district is directed toward serving rather than controlling the instructional program.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	4. The budget is planned in terms of education priorities.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	5. The district maintains adequate reserves for contingencies.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	6. Expenditures for unbudgeted items are authorized only after a review of total expenditures and other unmet needs.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	7. An insurance program is provided.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	8. The budget is presented to the board in a manner which promotes its full understanding.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	9. Full use of the teachers and other staff members is utilized in developing pertinent budget items.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	10. The administration shares with the board its own priorities on various budget items and amounts.	___ ___ ___ ___

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
___ ___ ___ ___	11. The board is provided with at least bi-monthly reports on the operating budget accounts.	___ ___ ___ ___

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

___ ___ ___ ___	1. Written board policy governs the relationship of board and staff with mass media — newspapers, television, radio:	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	a. Designates who shall be spokesman for the district.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	b. Encourages checking for facts with the district, and district cooperation to make all facts available.	___ ___ ___ ___
	2. A planned program to improve school-community relations is in effect including such things as:	
___ ___ ___ ___	a. Newsletters or bulletins for parents.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	b. School programs and exhibits.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	c. Speeches before community groups.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	d. Citizen involvement in study of specific school problems.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	e. Encouragement of PTA and other parent groups.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	f. Regularly-scheduled reports by the staff on various aspects of the instructional program at board meetings.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	g. A cooperative relationship with news media.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	h. Cooperation with other community agencies such as the planning commission, city council, family service agency, etc.	___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___	3. Written board policy outlines the channeling of complaints, criticisms, and concerns of the community for study and action.	___ ___ ___ ___

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Santa Ana Unified School District

BOARD OF EDUCATION: Mary J. Pryor, President • Volney F. Mann, Jr., Vice President • Ray Warren, Clerk • Joan Williamson, Member • James A. Richards, Member

MEETING ON AUGUST 11, 1981

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT ON FUTURE SCHOOL SITES

At the Board Meeting on April 28, 1981, the Board established a Citizens Advisory Committee to assist the Board by studying and making recommendations for future space needs.

Mr. Ray Bradley, Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee, presented its final report and recommendations.

The Board asked that the Administration prepare its recommendations along with timelines for implementation of the several recommendations offered by the Committee for presentation to the Board at a later meeting.

GIFTS

The Board acknowledged with appreciation the gift of a Leitz photograph enlarger for classroom use at Lathrop Intermediate School; two Colorburst 50 instant cameras to Taft Hearing Impaired School; and, two gifts to the Exploratory Learning Center of twenty yards of Ready Mix concrete for landscaping around the Kellogg House, and two backflow devices for irrigation of the ELC site.

BOARD POLICY 4317 - APPRAISAL OF MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

A revision to Board Policy 4317 was presented to the Board as a first reading. The Superintendent pointed out that the Policy as previously written gave the impression that a demotion or reassignment would be based solely on performance. Also, the revision clarifies certain procedural matters connected with evaluation and reassignment, and wording has been added to make clear the Board's authority to exercise independent judgment in matters of demotion.

HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM MODIFICATIONS

A job description for a Director of Vocational Education was approved. Also, the Administration was authorized to request proposals from consultants for the development of the Applied Curriculum. One or the other will be utilized during the 1981-1982 school year to develop the framework for the Applied Curriculum.

Correlation and interface of an Applied Curriculum with the College Preparatory and Remedial Curriculums will be the responsibility of the Director of Secondary Curriculum, except for the Vocational strand; however, there will be close liaison between these Directors concerning the Applied Curriculum and the Vocational strand.

It will be the responsibility of the Director of Vocational Education to direct the Vocational program and to work cooperatively with the Director of Secondary Curriculum for the purpose of keeping the Applied Curriculum current and meaningful. The development of the Applied Curriculum will be challenging; proposed duties were enumerated on the job description as interim responsibilities. These duties will be a full-time task for the 1981-82 school year for the successful introduction and implementation of the Applied Curriculum for the 1982-82 school year.

FACILITATOR, EXPLORATORY LEARNING CENTER

The Board also approved a job description for a Facilitator, Exploratory Learning Center.

At the present time the duty days of the Program Specialist assigned to the Exploratory Learning Center are the same as those of a classroom teacher. Full-time administrative assignment at the site is warranted because of the nature of the work involved. Also, increased accountability is needed to carry the level of responsibility beyond that expected of a Program Specialist.

The approved new job description for a Facilitator, Exploratory Learning Center more accurately identifies present duties and responsibilities of the position.

ASSESSMENT PANEL APPOINTED TO TEST TEACHERS FOR BILINGUAL COMPETENCY

One of the six requirements to be met in order to be granted an Emergency Bilingual/Crosscultural Teaching Credential is competency in aural understanding, speaking, reading, and writing in a language other than English, and an understanding of the culture associated with that language. Establishment of a panel from District personnel of bilingual certificated teachers to do this assessment was authorized at the meeting. This will greatly facilitate filling the District's open bilingual - English/Spanish - teaching positions. The panel will also certify to each applicant's English literacy as well as Spanish literacy.

The names of those selected to serve on a 5-member panel are as follows:

Teresa Araujo	Yvonne Isner
Muriel Favre	Kathleen Nurnberger
Rose Marie Fontana	Betty Poggi
Dee Dee Hamlin	Norma Riley
Angela Henderson	Narcisco Salce

PERSONNEL

The Board accepted with regret the notification of retirement of Donna Bohnett, teacher at Santa Ana High School for the past thirteen years; Michael Fody who has served at Willard Intermediate School since 1955; Elizabeth Johnson, instructional aide-Special Education at Martin Elementary School, who has served the District for thirteen years; and, Selly Bleecker, custodian at Valley High School for the past five and a half years.

The appointment of Teena Atchley as Principal of Taft Hearing Impaired School was unanimously approved by the Board. Ms. Atchley comes to the District from Centralia Unified School District where she served as Program Consultant for the Hearing Impaired.

MORENO VALLEY
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD BRIEFS

VOLUME I NUMBER TWO DECEMBER 19, 1979

BOARD SETS MEETING DATES

The Board presented their schedule of meetings for January and February:

January 8, 1980	Regular Meeting	Board Rm.	7:30 p.m.
January 15, 1980 January 29, 1980	Special Meetings Special Ed.	Board Rm.	7:30 p.m.
January 22, 1980	Regular Meeting	Board Rm.	7:30 p.m.
February 5, 1980	Regular Meeting	Board Rm.	7:30 p.m.
February 19, 1980	Special Meeting Superintendent/ Board Relations	Board Rm.	7:30 p.m.
February 22 1980 thru 24,1980	Special Meetings Board/Management Team Retreat	Out of Dist.	Extended Session

CHRISTMAS COFFEE PLANNED FOR DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

The Board wished to again invite all district employees to the Christmas Coffee hosted by the Management/Confidential Team on Thursday, December 20, in the multi-purpose room at the high school from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. A moment of shared fellowship and home-baked goodies will be featured.

NEW FEES ESTABLISHED FOR ADULT ED CLASSES

Community enrichment classes which are non-mandated and supported by student fees were granted a fee increase from $18 for 30 hours of instruction to $20. The increase was necessary to meet the added expense of operating costs.

ENROLLMENT REPORT PRESENTED

Enrollment continues to climb as the district works to house students.

Total Student Enrollment K-12:

September: 6,793 October: 6,856 November: 6,881 Late November: 6,910

BOARD DISCUSSES TRAFFIC PROBLEM

The Board discussed the traffic and parking problem at the high school. There was a great deal of concern as to student safety as most students continue to cross Cottonwood in front of the school. The Board will be looking into ways to ensure safety in this area as discussions continue with the Traffic Safety Council and the high school staff.

Laura Stocker, the Board's Student Representative, felt there was a need for a bike path. She is to consult with the High School ASB and report back to the Board.

BOARD REVIEWS TESTING RESULTS

"Are the tests really showing relative strengths and weaknesses?" "Does our curriculum match what the tests are testing?" "Do we counsel with kids about areas of their testing where there are problems?" "Are we sure students are being taught what the tests cover?" - - - All these questions and more were discussed as the Board talked of their concerns regarding student testing. It was the general feeling of the Board that there was a need for a systematic evaluation of our testing plan and that all testings results need to be identified by school.

BOARD CONTRACTED FOR ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES

The Board entered into agreement with the firm of Porter-Jensen-Hansen-Manzagol, Architects to assist the district in the development of the district's Master Plan The firm will interact with the districts Educational Specifications Committee to prepare building specifications and plans for an Elementary School Project so that when money is available to build, the district will be ready to move ahead on the bids.

THE BOARD ALSO APPROVED:

. . An interim policy for Special Education Noncompliance Complaints

. . A two part health program: First aide and Coronary Pulmonary Resuscitation programs to be offered through the Adult Education program to designated personnel at no cost and that the administation study and report back to the Board regarding the feasibility of including emergency training type courses into the secondary curriculum.

. . Major Maintenance projects with direction to clear up the back log of current work orders as soon as possible.

. . Commitment to indepth study of school operations, programs and policies by the board through separate subject study sessions.

NEW FACES AND NEW PLACES

Board approved employment assignments: Learning Handicapped Program - Jack Keally Lynn Fleischmann and Susan Moyer - Patricia Mark assigned Reading Coordinator for 1979-80 - Dorothy Gentry and Helen Brocklehurst approved as consultant Psychologists.

Change of scene: CoCo Carver was selected as secretary for the Pupil Personnel C .c and Doral Kinman as gardener.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM SERVES GRADES 6-7-8

The middle school program was initiated fourteen years ago to meet the special needs of Torrance students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Middle schools are: Jefferson and Lynn Middle Schools in west Torrance; Newton and Calle Mayor Middle Schools in south Torrance; Hull Middle School in central Torrance, and Magruder and Casimir Middle Schools in north Torrance.

Two remaining K-8 schools (Hickory and Fern-Greenwood) provide similar middle school programs for seventh and eighth grades.

The middle school organization enables students to be programmed into a variety of academic and enrichment courses and provides instruction by teacher specialists in a departmentalized setting.

STUDENTS TRAINED FOR JOBS

All high schools offer a full array of business education, consumer home economics and homemaking education, work experience, and some industrial arts for all students from their freshman year through their senior year. The Torrance School District is co-founder and active participant in the Southern California Regional Occupational Center (SCROC) which provides vocational training and job placement for interested high school juniors and seniors.

CLASSES OFFERED FOR ADULTS

The Torrance Board of Education has developed an excellent daytime and evening adult program that allows adult students to fulfill basic educational needs, vocational needs, avocational needs, and personal developmental needs. This year more than 277 different courses are being offered at 26 locations in the community. Classes are offered Monday through Saturday. Some adult classes are free-of-charge and are financed entirely from State of California funds. Other classes have a nominal tuition fee of $8.00 and are financed by this fee and the State of California funds. The balance of the classes are financed entirely by student tuition fees. For information telephone Meadow Park Adult School at 533-4454, Hamilton Adult School at 533-4459, or Wright Adult School at 533-4612.

MATERIALS CENTER SETS PACE IN FIELD

The School District has an Educational Materials Center (EMB) which provides deliveries of textbooks, library books, films, filmstrips, recordings, and art and study prints to every classroom in the District. This concept has been a forerunner in ways of providing services to classroom teachers. Many districts have used the Torrance EMB as a model for similar materials centers.

A resource center for teachers is located at Levy School. Teachers are provided material for construction of classroom instruction aids. Additionally, a wide range of in-service workshops are conducted there in the District's constant effort to improve teaching skills and upgrade instruction.

BOARD MEETINGS OPEN TO PUBLIC

Regular Board of Education meetings are held the first and third Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Educational Materials Building (EMB) at 2336 Plaza del Amo. The public is invited to all Board meetings. A copy of the agenda is available at each of the six public library branches throughout the City the Friday preceding each meeting.

PLEASE VISIT YOUR SCHOOL

Parents and interested citizens are welcome to visit schools at any time but are encouraged to call the school office for an appointment.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Mrs. Doris Casstevens, President
Dr. Owen H. Griffith, Vice President
Mr. John Barberis, Member
Mr. David Sargent, Member
Mrs. Fumiko Hachiya Wasserman, Member

SUPERINTENDENT
Dr. Edward J. Richardson

Published by the Torrance Unified School District
2335 Plaza del Amo, Torrance, CA 90509

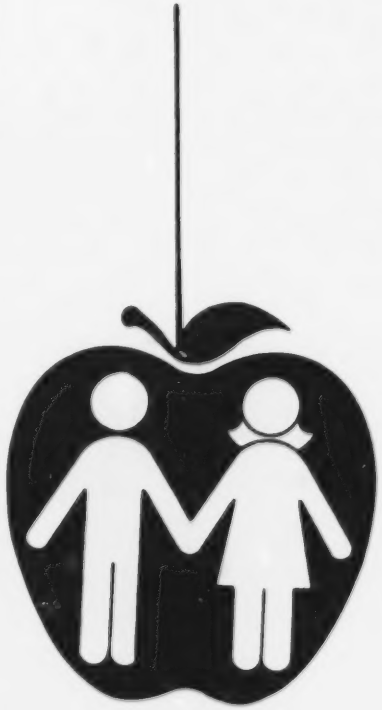
Publication #106

TORRANCE

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Capsule Portrait

1983-84



DISTRICT ENROLLS 19,882 STUDENTS

The Torrance Unified School District was established in 1947 and became a unified school district in 1948. In 1947 there were four schools and an enrollment of 2,000 students. This year 19,882 students are enrolled at 30 school sites.

Enrollment growth, which soared for two decades, has been declining during the past decade. As enrollment has declined, schools have been closed where necessary. Although the teaching staff has also declined, teacher-pupil ratios have not changed. With declining enrollment, the District has cut back administrative staff accordingly.

STUDENTS DO WELL SCHOLASTICALLY

Despite the fact that the District faced expansion problems for over 20 years, Torrance youngsters have done well scholastically. **Reading and achievement scores are above state and national averages.** Last June's graduates won more than $1.7 million dollars in scholarships.

All Torrance comprehensive high schools are fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Over 60% of Torrance high school graduates attend college.

INDIVIDUALITY EMPHASIZED

The strength of the Torrance school program is based upon our recognition of the uniqueness of each individual child. The individual needs of each child are considered by the teacher in planning for the instructional program.

Individual, small group instruction, and a variety of curricular options for students are designed to provide broad experiences and to promote success.

BONUS PROGRAMS ABOUND

Programs operated by the District which extend special benefits to students include: a school breakfast program at one elementary school and the Children's Center; a school lunch program; vocational training for handicapped and educationally disadvantaged students; a School Improvement Program (SIP) for children in 17 elementary schools and one middle school; a Gifted and Talented Education Program (GATE) which provides advanced instruction for elementary students in grades 3-8 and for high school students by means of the Honors and Advanced Placement classes; and a reading specialist at every elementary and middle school to assist students. Every elementary and middle school in the District has a special teacher for vocal music and a special teacher for instrumental music.

Under Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA), Fern-Greenwood, Edison, and Torrance Elementary Schools provide supplementary instructional services in reading, mathematics, and language development to educationally disadvantaged students in Kindergarten through fifth grade. ECIA/Chapter 2, Subchapter B, provides funding for educational improvement and support services to all schools.

In addition, all elementary, middle, and secondary schools in the District receive Economic Impact Aid (EIA) money to provide for the instructional needs of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students.

Over 1,000 students who have been identified as being individuals with exceptional needs receive special assistance in District regular, resource specialist, special day classes, and in County special classes.

Approximately 100 students receive adapted physical education services and health and nursing services individually or in small group instruction at District schools.

QUALITY EDUCATION MAINTAINED

According to the adopted budget for the 1983-84 school year, the Board of Education will spend approximately $52,749,825 from the General Fund to educate Torrance children.

School real estate holdings are valued at approximately $497,340,000. This value in real estate exceeds the District's outstanding debt and puts the School District in a fiscally solvent position.

TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED

Bus transportation is provided for elementary and middle school pupils who live more than a mile and a quarter from school and high school students who live more than two miles from school. Special Education students assigned to other than their home school receive daily home-to-school transportation services. Study trip buses are available for all grades (K-12) to enhance classroom studies.

In some instances when safety conditions warrant, transportation is provided elementary school children living within designated limits.

COMMUNICATION IS A TWO-WAY STREET

Torrance schools believe in keeping in close touch with parents and the community. In addition to annual group and semi-annual individual conferences between parents and teachers, the District encourages two-way communications through parent surveys and advisory committees.

Citizen committees which have acted in an advisory capacity to the Board of Education in recent years include a Textbook Advisory Committee; a Data Processing Committee; a Planning, Programming, Budgeting Systems Committee; an In-Plant Printing Committee; a Career Education Advisory Committee; a School Finance Advisory Committee; a Music Advisory Committee; a School Improvement Program (SIP); District Communication Council; an ESEA. Title 1 Committee: an Ad Hoc Committee on Cable Television; and an Ad Hoc Committee on Food Services.

GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUALS ADDRESSING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION — POLICY No. 188

Individuals desiring to address the board of education of the Torrance Unified School District may do so under the following guidelines:

1. Persons addressing the board may be required to show interest in the form of official residence, children in school, or other bona fide individual interest in the proceedings of the board.
2. No person may present orally or discuss charges or complaints against individual employees of the board at any meeting of the board.
3. Remarks by any person addressing the board which reflect adversely upon the character or motives of any person are out of order.
4. Attacks in the form of inferences, insinuations, and innuendoes against the character of the board, its members or employees are out of order.
5. Five (5) minutes may be allotted to each speaker and a maximum of twenty (20) minutes to each subject matter.
6. It shall be in order for the board members to interrupt a speaker at any time to ask questions or make comments as frequently as necessary to clarify the discussion.
7. During the time when the board is holding official session, only those persons (other than the board members) recognized by the chair shall be permitted to participate in the discussion. Any attempt by any person, not a member of the board or its staff, to discuss any motion pending before the board is out of order unless the board shall agree to hear such discussion.
8. Persistent violations of conduct by a participant repeatedly declared out of order by the chair for violations of the preceding regulations including boisterousness and persistent remarks against the board, its members, employees, or agents shall be grounds for summary termination by the chair of that person's privilege of address.
9. The board may take up matters of interest to individuals in the audience, either for the board's convenience or for the convenience of a member of the audience, if and when appropriate.

GUIDELINES FOR CITIZENS — AGENDA ITEMS, BOARD POLICY 185.1

Items submitted by the public pertaining directly to school business may be placed on the Board agenda by the interested party submitting a completed District form to the Office of the Superintendent not less than ten (10) calendar days before any regularly scheduled meeting of the Governing Board. Persons wishing to submit an item to the Board may contact the Superintendent's Office for the format.

Come Again . . .

We are pleased to have had you with us.

Doris Contreras — President of the Board

Edward Richardson — Supt. of Schools & Secy. to the Board

1983-84

2335 Plaza del Amo
Torrance, California
90509

TORRANCE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT · ESTABLISHED 1947 · UNIFIED 1948 ·

DR. EDWARD J. RICHARDSON
Superintendent of Schools

Welcome

To a meeting of the Torrance Unified School District Board of Education.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Board is responsible to the State government and the local citizens for the education of pupils from kindergarten through twelfth grade, including special education programs, adult education, continuation school, and the children's center.

MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held in the Board Room, Educational Materials Building, 2336 Plaza del Amo, on the first and third Mondays of each month.

When the regular meeting date falls on a holiday, the Board meets the following evening.

BOARD AGENDA

A printed copy of the minutes of the previous meeting and a copy of the Board Agenda are sent to each Board member at least four days prior to the Board meeting. Board members study this material carefully and come to the meeting prepared to question, discuss, and take action on each item.

On the Thursday preceding the Board meeting, the Board Agenda is made available to designated authorized individuals and organizations, and a copy is placed in each of the seven libraries in Torrance.

PUB. LD. 79

BOARD OF EDUCATION — 1983-84

The Board is composed of five residents of the school district who have been elected by the voters of Torrance to serve a four-year term.

MRS. DORIS CASSTEVENS, President

Mrs. Casstevens was elected to the Board in November, 1981. A resident of Torrance for the past 19 years, she is employed as a legal secretary/paralegal. Mrs. Casstevens attended Columbia University. She has served as PTA president of Edison Elementary School, PTA Council Early Childhood Education chairperson, and presiding officer of the District Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee for six years. Mrs. Casstevens was the recipient of a PTA Certificate of Appreciation in February, 1979 and an Honorary Service Award in January, 1983.

DR. GUIDO E. GRIFFITH, Vice President

Dr. Griffith has been a member of the Board since 1967. He is past president and Executive Board member of the Los Angeles County School Trustees Association. Past president, chairman of the Policy Review Committee, and member of the Delegate Assembly and Legislative Network of the California School Boards Association, he is also a member of the Federal Relations Network of the National School Boards Association. Dr. Griffith has served as a member of the Intergovernmental Board on Information Systems, the California Citizens Commission on Tort Reform, the Commission on Educational Management and Evaluation, and as president of the South Bay Trustees and Administrators Association. He is the District's representative to Southern California Regional Occupational Center (SCROC), and he is currently president of the Joint Powers Board. Dr. Griffith holds the California PTA Honorary Service Award, the Torrance School Administrators Golden Apple Award, and the Torrance Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Citizen Award. He received his bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctorate in engineering and mathematics from Cornell University.

MR. JOHN BARBERIS

Mr. Barberis was elected to the Board in November, 1981. He has served as a Los Angeles County Probation Officer for the past 13 years. Mr. Barberis received his A.A. degree from Santa Monica College, his B.S. in health administration from California State University, Northridge, and his Juris Doctorate from San Fernando Valley College of Law. He holds a certificate in Peace Officers Standards Training from the State of California, is a member of the South Bay Trustees and Administrators Association, and California Probation, Parole, and Correctional Officers Association. Mr. Barberis is a past church trustee and councilman.

MR. DAVID SARGENT

Mr. Sargent is an aerospace project engineer working in the area of laser research. He was elected to the Board in November, 1983. Mr. Sargent holds Bachelor and Master of Electrical Engineering degrees from Cornell University and a Certificate in Technical Management from UCLA. He is currently on the Board of Managers of the Torrance-South Bay YMCA and is an Elder and Chairman of the Board of Trustees at St. Andrew's Church. Mr. Sargent has been an AYSO Regional Commissioner and President of the Hollywood Riviera Sportsman's Club. He is a recipient of the PTA Honorary Service Award and the TRW Good Neighbor Award.

MRS. FUMIKO MACHIYA WASSERMAN

Mrs. Wasserman is an assistant United States attorney for the Central District of California. Elected to the Board in November, 1981, she is a graduate of Loyola Law School where she was a member of the Law Review and on the Dean's List. Mrs. Wasserman received her B.A. degree from UCLA. She is a member of the Board of Directors of Pacific Heritage Bank (Torrance), a member of the Board of Governors of the Loyola Law School Alumni Association, and served as a judicial clerk, United States District Court, Los Angeles, as a deputy city attorney for the city of Los Angeles, and was a teacher for the Torrance Unified School District (1969-73).

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF OUR SCHOOLS

WE BELIEVE that education is a dynamic, evolving relationship with subject matter the means, the student the product, and society the result.

WE BELIEVE that education must be a cooperative effort involving the student, the home, the school, and the entire community.

WE BELIEVE that education is a lifelong process of learning and living. Students need to know and understand the implications of their knowledge.

WE BELIEVE that students must understand themselves and their environment if they are to understand others.

WE BELIEVE that education should offer each individual multiple opportunities for success and self-fulfillment.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

A school system must be run in accordance with the following controls:

1. The Constitution of the State of California.
2. State legislation as found in:
   - Education Code
   - Government Code
   - Motor Vehicle Code
   - Health and Safety Code
   - Labor Code
   - Welfare and Institutions Code
3. California Administrative Code, Title 5.
4. Policies and procedures established by this Board of Education.

Under these guidelines the Board of Education establishes the educational policies, which are executed by the Superintendent of Schools, whose prime responsibility is to provide creative, effective educational leadership.

The district gets its legal advice from the Los Angeles County Counsel, who is the Board of Education's legal counsel in court cases.

Chapter 4.
Board Self-Evaluation

Notes

An important part of leadership that you can provide as the board president is to assist your board in a systematic, periodic evaluation. Done properly, this can have many benefits. It need not be threatening or negative. The approach should be one of . . . "Let's take a look at ourselves so that we can do a better job."

Board evaluation can be done informally and in-house with a small amount of time and resources or it can be formal and even involve consultants. CSBA offers such a formal evaluation process to requesting districts. Each board will have to determine the degree to which it feels it needs to go — it likely will vary from one time to another. Regardless of how evaluation occurs, the critical point is that it does occur.

Evaluation should be entered into with a positive attitude and a willingness to change. A procedure should be used that the board has reviewed and accepts as a responsible approach to take. Each person should be completely aware of the intent, the process, the expected outcome, and the way that the information will be used.

The role and involvement of the superintendent is critical if this process is to be successful. Your leadership, as board president, is crucial in arriving at a reasonable involvement of the superintendent so that he/she does not have to compromise his/her own role while assisting you and the board in evaluating your role and effectiveness.

The following material discusses the need, the process and the methods for board self-evaluation — including resources you can turn to for further information and consultation.

A Time for Action*

Concern with the quality of our schools has given rise to a renewed interest in the evaluation of teachers, administrators and programs. But the one area where little effort has been directed is that of formally evaluating the performance of the school board. Many boards have checklists and other forms for a self-evaluation, but most boards let the process go unattended. Education literature reveals a long history of efforts made to assist boards in developing an evaluation process for assessing their efforts. However, very few school systems have a formalized system of evaluation for the board of education, i.e.; a statement in the district's policy manual dealing with the evaluation of the board of education. Additionally, there is a set of criteria; a time frame for relevant events to occur; instrumentation for collecting data; and specification of assignments to various individuals, groups or total board, for carrying out the steps in the evaluation. Data interpretation with a written or oral report to the board and a prescriptive follow-up process for dealing with any shortcomings is needed also.

A new sense of interest by school boards in accountability of their performance is mounting. However, one can still legitimately raise the question, "Why do so few boards of education undertake a formal or

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informal evaluation of their performance?" Even boards that have structured a detailed process for their evaluation somehow manage to avoid it year after year. They reason that their responsibilities leave precious little time for anything else. The truth is, the process is time consuming and more complex than most school boards realize at the onset.

Board members serve as public representatives charged with governing our public schools, and the public very well could begin clamoring for a more structured process of board evaluation. They have a right not only to demand but to insist that boards of education be held accountable for their performance and ultimate actions. Prudent boards of education will be quick to take a leadership role and develop their evaluation system before one is forced upon them.

Need for An Evaluation System

A good evaluation system provides the opportunity to identify areas of strength which can be built upon to make a board more effective. It also identifies those areas where a board may have shortcomings. To systematically evaluate and isolate shortcomings means that a responsible board can undertake corrective measures to improve its performance in a timely fashion. A truly responsible board of education will insist that it undertakes an annual or semiannual assessment of its performance.

Where Does A Board Begin?

There is little need for any school board to start from scratch when developing an evaluation process. In a recent computer scan on this topic, it was possible to generate abstracts on 134 articles on school board evaluation in a relatively quick fashion. Any board which has a genuine desire to study the pros and cons of a board evaluation system can easily locate sufficient data in the literature. A telephone call or letter to CSBA or the National School Boards Association requesting materials will also be productive. Sufficient rationale, goals, objectives, criteria and instrumentation has been developed ten times over through the efforts of researchers, administrators, and school boards on the topic.

If your board is interested, it can secure copies of the relevant literature and then make an attempt to modify and adapt any given rationale, statements of goals and objectives, list of criteria, and selected instruments to the local school district situation. *Do not make the task more difficult than it is.* Review the mountain of materials already developed and tailor an existing board evaluation to your local situation before attempting to construct an entirely new one. A consultant may be needed to bring the board and evaluation process together.

Approach the evaluation process from a *positive* perspective. It is only human to be intimidated by any process that threatens to expose our shortcomings and lay us bare to the public, perhaps subjecting ourselves to just or unjust criticism. A sound formal evaluation system, which the board has structured for itself, can provide a meaningful way to measure goals, objectives and performance. Demanding to be held accountable will allow the board to observe and help itself. You then could be in a position of saying to the community, "Here, public, are the areas where the board or system is in need of assistance. We now need your support in overcoming them."

Be a board that wants to perform well. Evaluate your performance periodically and then take corrective measures to improve your performance. It also sets a nice tone for the district. Teachers and administrators may view the entire evaluation process more positively if they are aware of board efforts to undertake an evaluation of itself. In turn, it will help a school board to become more sensitive to its complexities if the evaluation process which they expect is in place for teachers, students, support staff and the administration.

Evaluation Format

Boards of education tend to view themselves as being somewhat unique when it comes to evaluation of their own performance. Most boards undertaking an evaluation feel only that they are capable and knowledgeable enough of their performance to take part in the evaluation. Consequently, those boards interested in being evaluated usually undertake a self-evaluation. This is a very legitimate posture to take and self-evaluation can be very useful.

On the other hand, most boards feel that self-evaluation of the superintendent, other administrators, teachers or support staff is not totally sufficient. They insist that the employees of the district also have an evaluation of their performance carried out by someone in superior or more objective positions in the district's hierarchy. This position is quite defensible. However, what may be needed is to have boards of education adopt an evaluation system that provides input from several relevant reference groups.

A self-evaluation by the board makes great sense. Boards also should encourage the superintendent to evaluate their performance. It would make great sense, and have value to a board, to commission a team composed of representatives of the community, administrative staff, teachers and supportive staff. The largest group should be the community representatives, coming from PTA groups, government leaders, civil and social groups and the business community.

The purpose of the board evaluation, whether it be a self-evaluation, evaluation by others, or some combination, should be for improving the corporate operation of the board. It should be a positive experience designed to highlight the positive aspects of the board to further build on them and to identify any negative aspects which would require action and effort to improve. Once any shortcomings are identified, the board can structure specific steps to take to improve their performance. Identifying shortcomings is one thing, providing concrete steps for dealing with them is perhaps the most important part in the process if the board wants to work toward improving its effectiveness.

In Summary

As elected or appointed lay citizens serving on a board of education you have a responsibility to all the citizens of your state to represent their educational interests in the most responsible fashion. Schools exist for the students who have every right to expect that the state will provide them with the best quality education possible. As a member of the board of education you can see that this expectation of the state and the students becomes a reality.

The process of board evaluation is much more complex than just responding quickly to a form or set of evaluation instruments. A great

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deal of time and energy goes into undertaking a meaningful board evaluation. Someone has to spend time developing a rationale, written policy statement, goals, objectives, criteria, data collection instruments and data gathering.

Analysis and interpretation of the data must then be undertaken. A written summary of the board's evaluation should be prepared and distributed to all board members. A separate meeting, with no other business on the agenda, should be scheduled to discuss the results of the evaluation. Prescriptive steps for adequately dealing with any shortcomings or concerns need to be mapped out and adhered to.

By design this discussion has not focused on specific criteria or instruments for evaluating the school board. The importance of developing an evaluation system for measuring how well a board is doing or not doing is quite clear. A good evaluation system helps a board to better understand their role as board members, operate more effectively as a board, be held accountable in public and improve their overall performance. Few argue with the necessity for constructing a sound evaluation system. The task at hand appears to be how to get school boards to actively endorse and become committed to an annual performance evaluation.

There are many features to a sound board evaluation process. Some of the many variables a board must consider are those listed in the box on the next page.

CSBA's Board Self-Evaluation Service

The Board Self-Evaluation Service performed by CSBA is based upon the premise that cooperation between the people in the organization is influenced by their perception of six factors:

- teamwork
- decision making
- motivation
- control
- coordination
- communication
- influence
- goal achievement

Goal achievement is influenced by people's perception of planning, and in the case of school boards, policy development. Therefore, cooperation to achieve the school's goals is dependent upon the perceptions of the people. If everyone on a school board has about the same perception of how these factors are working "now" and they don't "wish it were" any different, then it can be said that there is a high degree of congruence and cooperation on the school board. If, on the other hand, one board member's perception of how the factors are functioning "now" is greatly different than another board member's perception of how the factors are functioning "now" it may then be said that there is a low degree of congruence between the two board members and possibly some conflict. In another case, a disgruntled board member may also be the result of "wishing" the factors were a great deal better than they are "now."

One method of measuring and understanding the perceptions of the board members is to use an instrument to collect their perceptions of

Features of An Evaluation System

1. A statement endorsed and approved by the board should be included in the policy handbook of the school district dealing with the evaluation of the school board.

2. A set of criteria, which the board periodically reviews, as a set of standards to measure itself against should be adopted.

3. A time frame should be developed and adhered to, that specifies which activities are to be undertaken and by whom. The board is responsible for adhering to the time frame. The superintendent should not be expected to police the board.

4. A specific meeting date should be scheduled with no other items on the agenda at a study session with all board members present. If prior assignments were given to board members to complete any evaluation instruments, this task should be accomplished by all board members prior to the evaluation session being held.

5. Input into the evaluation process should be made by each individual board member, but the results should be a composite which is discussed by the entire board. Tie the board evaluation into the total management evaluating system, which includes the superintendent, and you can legitimately conduct the evaluation in executive session if appropriate.

6. It is very important that discussions of the board's performance be depersonalized as much as possible. Discussions should focus openly on behavior both positive and negative but not on persons. It is important to keep in clear perspective that the school board, while a collection of individual persons, should be evaluated as a corporate public body.

7. Discussion of the evaluation should focus on both the strengths and weaknesses of the board.

8. A deliberate plan or set of follow-up activities designed to improve upon the weakness should be developed, preferably in writing, and adhered to by all board members.

9. The evaluation of the board should be undertaken at least once a year and more frequently if local conditions warrant.

10. The totality of the board's responsibilities may go beyond a single evaluation instrument. Room for open-ended responses or comments should be provided to cover those areas not adequately provided for on the evaluation form used.

11. Consider the development of a set of yearly board objectives, and longer range board goals, as part of the yearly evaluation system.

12. Wherever possible provide supportive rationale and objective evidence to support judgements.

13. If the board expects the superintendent, administration, professional staff and supportive staff to be evaluated, the board should lead the way by having its own performance evaluated. It will also provide the board with a better understanding of the complex process of evaluation of people's performance.

14. Take a positive approach to evaluation to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the school board. The end result should be that the school district and the students will ultimately gain from the evaluation.

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these very important factors and then have them share their collective perceptions with one another. Such a process is called a data based feedback system.

CSBA uses a data based feedback system in the Board Self Evaluation Service. The instrument is designed to collect the school board member's perceptions about team building, decision making, functions, planning, communications, motivation, control, coordination, influence and policy development.

It is designed to collect the participant's perceptions on two levels. A "now" column represents the participant's perception of how much there is now of a given characteristic. The "wish" column represents how much they wish there were of a given characteristic. Each item in the "now" column and the "wish" column is rated on a scale of 1-7. The actual numeric value each participant gives an item has no real meaning other than the discussion it stimulates between the participants. After the averages for all respondents to each item in the "now" column and the averages for each item in the "wish" column are calculated and compared, it may well present the board and the superintendent with some interesting pictures about their perceptions. For example, if the average of the responses were:

1.1 How friendly and easy is it for you to approach the other members of your school board?
NOW 2.1 WISH 7.0

The above response might well suggest that the "average" perception of the board is that their board is not friendly and easy to approach. However, one board member might have marked the instrument like the example below:

1.1 How friendly and easy is it for you to approach the other members of your school board?
NOW 7.0 WISH 7.0

The above example would suggest that at least one school board member was very pleased with how friendly and easy it is to approach the board. The differences between individual responses provide the basis for discussion and goal clarification and setting.

In another case, the average response of the board may be as follows:

1.4 To what extent do members of your school board encourage each other to work as a *team*?
NOW 6.8 WISH 5.1

This response might well suggest that the board members wish they would do a little less work as a team. Again, this should stimulate an interesting discussion with resulting ways to accomplish the desired outcome.

This service has been field tested with outstanding results. It is proving to be a valuable tool for the boards throughout California.

There is a daily fee for this service. For more information contact CSBA's field services unit.

In addition, other services are available from CSBA in this area including workshops on:

- board/superintendent relationships

- conflict management
- effective meeting
- policy development
- program evaluation
- communicating with the community

Footnote

*"Evaluating the Board of Education" by Robert W. Heller, excerpted from the January 1985 Journal of the New York State School Boards Association. Copyright 1985. All rights reserved.

Notes

Backup Materials

How Do Your Meetings Rate?

The checklist on the following pages is a method for assessing meeting practices.
Directions:

Under each of the five meeting variables are several items to which you should respond. The range of responses go from 1 to 4 with 1 considered "ideal."

Please circle the number in the column which represents your board's typical practice.

As a check against good practice, you may also want to put an "X" beside each item which would indicate the way you feel your board meetings should operate. Totaling the number of variables will give you a general idea of the status of your governing board meetings as a comparison between the way you perceive them to be and the way you would like them to become.

It might also be interesting to compare perceptions of staff members and others with the perceptions of board members.

For those who enjoy numerical ratings, a score of 50 is the top score which would represent the "most effective" meeting. A score of 200 is the poorest score.

If you want quick assessment, check only the items which are asterisked. This will give you 20 major items (top score — 20; poorest score — 80).

Board Meeting Management Checklist

Ideal Practice	← Score →				Poor Practice
Preparation for the Meeting					
*1. Board meeting facilities provide the "best" environment for board meetings.	1	2	3	4	The Board meets in whatever facilities are available regardless of their adequacy.
2. The Board conducts its meetings with seating arrangements which allow the district's business affairs to be conducted by the Board and its administrative staff.	1	2	3	4	Little or no thought is given to Board or staff seating arrangements.
3. At Board meetings the audience is placed in a position to make a clear line of demarcation between themselves and the Board.	1	2	3	4	The audience sits with or alongside of Board members at Board meetings.
4. The Board selects its president on the basis of his/her ability to conduct meetings and to perform effectively rather than on seniority/rotation.	1	2	3	4	Seniority is the major or even the only criterion for selection of the Board president.
5. The Board has a set procedure so that Board members can get items on the agenda without undue difficulty.	1	2	3	4	Board members have difficulty getting items on the Board agenda.
6. Board members have adequate time to review the agenda prior to the meetings.	1	2	3	4	The agenda is not in the hands of Board members in sufficient time for adequate review prior to the meeting.
7. New items of a complex nature are *not* introduced for action if they are *not* listed on the agenda but are presented for listing on a subsequent agenda for consideration and action.	1	2	3	4	Board members are often "surprised" by requests for action on complex agenda items without adequate notice.
*8. Each board member makes a sincere effort to read and to be informed on all agenda items listed prior to the meetings.	1	2	3	4	Some Board members come to Board meetings without having read the supporting information about agenda items.
*9. Each agenda item has an appropriate amount of time allocated to it.	1	2	3	4	Agenda items are not timed.

*For a "quick" assessment, use only asterisked items.

Ideal Practice	← Score →				Poor Practice
10. Board meetings have a predetermined closing time as a goal.	1	2	3	4	No pre-determined closing time is set for Board meetings.
*11. Routine agenda items are acted upon through a consent procedure.	1	2	3	4	The Board "agonizes" over each agenda item regardless of its importance or complexity.
12. Arrangements are made for appropriate media access to Board meetings.	1	2	3	4	The media is disregarded or ignored in planning for Board meetings.
13. The Board has established written policies for conducting meetings which include provision for the public to be heard, but prevent a single individual or group from dominating or controlling discussions.	1	2	3	4	The Board has no policies or by-laws for proper conduct of its meetings.
*14. Public expression on individual agenda items is allowed for *before* the Board deliberates and decides.	1	2	3	4	Members of the audience express their opinions freely at any time during Board discussions or deliberations.
*15. Provision is made *early* on the agenda for public oral communications which do not pertain to specific agenda items.	1	2	3	4	Members of the audience are not permitted to address the board about concerns *not* on the agenda or must sit through the meeting and address the Board at the end of the meeting.
16. Board members set study sessions upon occasion to deal in depth with important issues.	1	2	3	4	The Board seldom, if ever, sets study sessions.
17. Closed (executive) sessions are held only when needed.	1	2	3	4	The Board holds closed (executive) sessions almost routinely.
*18. The Board adheres strictly to the provisions set forth in the law for closed sessions.	1	2	3	4	Closed sessions are used by the Board to discuss items which Board members prefer not to discuss in public regardless of whether the subject meets Brown Act provisions.
Operation of the Meeting					
19. Board meetings begin on time.	1	2	3	4	Board meetings start late almost always.
*20. Board meetings are paced so as to complete the agenda and finish at or near the predetermined closing time.	1	2	3	4	Board meetings are not paced so that items late on the agenda are often hurried due to the lateness of the hour.

Ideal Practice	← Score →				Poor Practice
21. The Board president adheres generally to the time allocated to each item.	1	2	3	4	Even when a specified time is allocated to an agenda item, the Board president pays little attention to the limits.
*22. Agenda items are reviewed and any changes in priority are set by the Board as an early item on the Agenda.	1	2	3	4	The agenda is followed as printed without regard for any need to change the order of items in response to circumstances.
23. Closure on each agenda item is obtained before the Board moves to the next item.	1	2	3	4	The Board moves from one item to the next without specific action or closure being effected on the prior item.
24. The Board president truly runs the meetings and is not just a "figurehead."	1	2	3	4	The Board president rarely, if ever, controls the meeting; it generally runs itself.
*25. The Board president controls audience participation so that such participation does not interfere with Board deliberations.	1	2	3	4	The Board president permits audience interruption or participation to such an extent that Board deliberations or decision-making is sometimes disrupted.
26. During Board meetings questions directed at staff are processed through the Superintendent.	1	2	3	4	Questions are routinely asked of staff members instead of directing them through the Superintendent.
27. Board members are aware that Board meetings are "meetings held in public; not public meetings."	1	2	3	4	Board meetings more nearly resemble "Town Hall Meetings" than Board deliberation/decision-making meetings of elected officials.
Decision-Making During the Meeting					
*28. In discussing agenda items the Board thinks through the problems and their causes before reaching decision.	1	2	3	4	There is a tendency for the Board to propose answers without really thinking through the problems and their causes.
29. When problems come up in the meetings they are thoroughly explored until everyone understands what the problem is.	1	2	3	4	Decisions are often reached before all Board members really understand the problem.
*30. The Board withholds definite Board action until after a Superintendent recommendation is requested and presented.	1	2	3	4	The Superintendent is rarely, if ever, asked for a recommendation.

Ideal Practice	← Score →				Poor Practice
31. Superintendent recommendations are accepted as well-though-out professional recommendations.	1	2	3	4	Board members often completely disregard the Superintendent's recommendation or consider it a personal rather that a professional recommendation.
32. Board members discuss the pros and cons of several different alternate solutions to a problem before making a decision.	1	2	3	4	Alternate solutions to a problem are rarely considered by the Board in making its decision.
*33. When conflicts over decisions come up, the Board does not avoid them, but stays with the conflicts and works them through.	1	2	3	4	The reasons or causes of Board member conflicts or disagreements are seldom addressed.
34. Solutions and decisions are in accord with full discussion and deliberation so that all members have full attention paid to their point of view.	1	2	3	4	The Board president makes full use of the "power" of the chairmanship to obtain decisions which agree with his or her point of view.
35. The Board makes timely decisions even when controversy is inevitable.	1	2	3	4	The Board procrastinates on difficult decisions.
*36. The Board attempts to arrive at decisions which express a consensus before formalized votes are taken.	1	2	3	4	Motions are made and seconded before full discussion takes place, resulting in retraction of motions and seconds, failure to obtain seconds to motions, or frequent minority votes due to lack of discussion.
37. When a decision is made, it is clear who should carry it out and when.	1	2	3	4	Decisions are often unclear as to how and by whom they are to be implemented.
*38. Board members feel committed to carrying out the decisions made by the Board no matter what their personal feelings might be.	1	2	3	4	After a formal Board decision has been made, some Board members do not support the implementation of the decision or actively sabotage it.
Board Member Participation During the Meeting					
*39. Board members strive to work closely together as a Board for the benefit of the students and avoid negative "political" practices such as alliances, trade-offs, etc.	1	2	3	4	There are splits or deadlocks between factions or subgroups of the Board.

Ideal Practice	← Score →				Poor Practice
40. Genuine disagreement among Board members based on principle is openly recognized and accommodated without adverse criticism or acrimony.	1	2	3	4	When there is disagreement among Board members, it tends to be smoothed over or avoided.
*41. Board members feel free to state their opinions or ask questions without fear of criticism or ridicule.	1	2	3	4	Some Board members remain silent during the meetings, even when they have something to contribute, for fear of criticism.
42. Board members keep their comments or questions focused on the agenda item under discussion.	1	2	3	4	Some board members continually bring up extraneous or irrelevant matters.
43. Board members use Board meeting time for genuine discussion and problem solving.	1	2	3	4	Individual Board members use Board meetings as a forum for lengthly presentations on their "pet" projects or to "play to the audience."
44. The Board president makes certain all Board members have equal opportunity to present their views.	1	2	3	4	The same few Board members do most of the talking during the meetings.
*45. Board members take care to be positive and constructive when commenting on the work of the superintendent or the staff.	1	2	3	4	At Board meetings, some Board members make negative, derisive, or even punitive statements about the superintendent or staff.
Procedures Following the Meetings					
46. Minutes of meetings are distributed within a specific time following the meeting.	1	2	3	4	Minutes of meetings are almost always late.
*47. Board minutes are an accurate record of each Board action.	1	2	3	4	Board minutes are normally in substantial error of actions taken, contain extraneous comments, or have omissions.
48. Responsibility for staff action is recorded where appropriate.	1	2	3	4	Minutes do not contain information as to staff action or date/time that action is expected.
49. The confidentiality of closed sessions is strictly observed as required by law.	1	2	3	4	Board members sometimes "leak" comments on deliberations held in closed session.
*50. Board meetings are evaluated periodically by members to assess their effectiveness.	1	2	3	4	Board meetings are not evaluated for their effectiveness nor are they open to review or change. ■

The checklist on the following pages is included to assist board presidents in setting up a procedure for board self-appraisal. (CSBA also offers boards, for a fee, a formal evaluation workshop which includes comparison of how various factors are *actually working*, and how they *should be working*.)

BOARD SELF-APPRAISAL INSTRUMENT

California School Boards Association

Directions:

1. In the left-hand column, each board member should independently rate each item using a scale of "1 to 4".

   1 - being done in an excellent manner

   2 - being done but needs improvement

   3 - not being done, effort should be made to do it

   4 - not necessary

2. In the right-hand column, individual ratings should be completed and where discrepancies exist, a common rating should be agreed upon whenever possible.

3. Decisions should be made concerning those items where improvement has been indicated.

4. Some plan for follow-up should be made and responsibilities assigned.

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THE SCHOOL BOARD LOOKS AT ITSELF

The instrument for self-appraisal by the board is intended for use by the board only, but the reaction of the superintendent may be requested if desired. It may also be useful in instances where an individual board member fails to understand his/her role as a member of a team and it becomes necessary for the board to call this fact to his/her attention.

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
	Personal Qualities	
	Each Board Member has:	
_ _ _ _	1. A sincere and unselfish interest in public education and in the contribution it makes to the development of children.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	2. A knowledge of the many facets of the community which the school system is designed to serve.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	3. An ability to think independently, to grow in knowledge, and to rely on fact rather than prejudice, and a willingness to hear and consider all sides of a controversial question.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	4. A deep sense of loyalty to associates and respect for group decisions cooperatively reached.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	5. A respect, for, and interest in, people and ability to get along with them.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	6. A willingness to work through defined channels of authority and responsibility.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	7. A willingness to devote the necessary time to become an effective board member by reading and attending educational workshops and conferences.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	8. A commitment to respecting the confidentiality of the closed session.	_ _ _ _
	Community Relationships	
	The Board:	
_ _ _ _	1. Encourages the public to attend board meetings.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	2. Actively fosters cooperation with various news media for the dissemination of information about the school system.	_ _ _ _

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
_ _ _ _	3. Insures a continuous planned program of public information regarding the schools.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	4. Participates actively in community affairs.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	5. Channels all concerns, complaints, and criticisms of the school system through the superintendent for study and report back to the board if action is required.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	6. Protects the superintendent from unjust criticism and the efforts of unfair but vocal special-interest groups.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	7. Establishes bylaws to control the interval operations of the governing board.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	8. Encourages citizen participation in an advisory capacity in the solution of specific problems.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	9. Is aware of community attitudes and the special-interest groups which seek to influence the district's program.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	10. Takes leadership in developing an open and highly ethical community-wide effort to find and persuade its most capable members to file for candidacy for the board of education.	_ _ _ _

Board Meetings

The Board:

_ _ _ _	1. Has established written policies for conducting meetings which include provision for the public to be heard, but prevents a single individual or group from dominating or controlling discussions.	_ _ _ _

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
	2. Conducts its meetings in such room and seating arrangements as to allow the district's business affairs to be conducted by the board and its administrative staff. The audience is placed in such a position as to make a clear line of demarcation between themselves and the board.	
	3. Selects a chairman on the basis of his or her ability to properly conduct a meeting rather than on seniority or rotation.	
	4. Provision should be made for emergency actions (see District Legal Advisor). New items of a complex nature are not introduced for action if they are not listed on the agenda but are presented for listing on a subsequent agenda for consideration and action.	
	5. Should withhold definitive board action until after a staff recommendation is requested and presented.	
	6. Should take care to be positive and constructive when criticizing the work of the superintendent or staff.	
	7. The privilege of holding over matters for further study is not abused.	
	8. Each member makes a sincere effort to be read and to be informed on all agenda items listed prior to the meeting.	
	9. Board members insist on receiving their agenda sufficiently in advance of the meetings to enable them to read the agenda material carefully. The board recognizes, however, that there can be emergency items needing immediate consideration.	
	10. Closed sessions are held only when needed, and the board adheres strictly to the items in the law set forth for executive sessions.	

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
	Relationship With Superintendent	
	The Board:	
_ _ _ _	1. Establishes written policies for the guidance of the superintendent in the operation of the schools which are reviewed at least once a year.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	2. Provides the superintendent with a clear statement of the expectation of performance and personal qualities which will be evaluated periodically by the board.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	3. Provides the superintendent with a well thought out job description which is reviewed periodically.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	4. Engenders confidence in the superintendent by establishing and maintaining a climate of trust and open two-way communications.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	5. Reaches decisions only on the basis of study of all available background data and consideration of the recommendation of the superintendent.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	6. Provides a climate of mutual respect and trust offering commendation whenever earned, and constructive criticism when necessary.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	7. Provides opportunity and encouragement for professional growth of the superintendent.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	8. Recognizes the need for the superintendent to have time to plan.	_ _ _ _
	Staff and Personnel Relationships	
	The Board:	
_ _ _ _	1. Develops sound personnel policies, involving the staff when appropriate.	_ _ _ _

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
	2. Authorizes the employment or dismissal of staff members only upon the recommendation of the superintendent.	
	3. Has a policy for employees to take care of problems and complaints.	
	4. Is receptive to suggestions for improvement of the school system originating with the staff.	
	5. Encourages professional growth of staff and increased competency through:	
	a. Attendance at education meetings.	
	b. Training on the job.	
	c. Salary increments which recognize approved in-service training programs, and experience beyond minimum qualifications for a given position.	
	6. Praises staff for a job well done.	
	7. Has adopted a written policy on academic freedom.	

Relationship to the Instructional Program

The Board:

	1. Understands the instructional program and establishes standards for each grade level and each subject area - including graduation requirements for regular and special education students.	
	2. Realistically faces the ability of the community to support quality education for its children.	
	3. Resists the efforts of special-interest groups to influence the instructional program if the effect would be detrimental to the students.	
	4. Encourages the participation of the professional staff, the public, and students in the development of the curricula.	

YOUR CHOICE 1 2 3 4		BOARD'S DECISION 1 2 3 4
_ _ _ _	5. Weighs all decisions in terms of what is best for the students.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	6. Keeps abreast of new developments in course content and teaching techniques through attendance and participation in school board association conferences and meetings of other educational groups, by reading of selected books and periodicals, and visiting schools in other districts.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	7. Provides a policy outlining the district's educational goals and objectives against which the instructional program can be evaluated.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	8. Requests periodic evaluations of each program at each school site.	_ _ _ _

Relationship to Financial Management of the Schools

The Board:

_ _ _ _	1. Equates the income and expenditures of the district in terms of the quality of education that should be provided and the ability of the community to support such a program.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	2. Takes the leadership in suggesting and securing community support for additional financing when necessary.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	3. Establishes written policies which will insure efficient administration of purchasing, accounting, payroll procedures, and the insurance program.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	4. Authorizes individual budgetary allotments and special non-budgeted expenditures only after considering the total needs of the district.	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	5. Makes provision for long-range planning about school sites, facilities and plant maintenance.	_ _ _ _

Chapter 5. Leadership Strategies & Resources

Notes

Much has been written about the nature and use of conflict as a medium of social accommodation and change. Board members, especially board presidents, are often the focus of conflict. How you deal with that conflict can determine how useful or disruptive it will be. The following information, much of it adapted from materials published by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory,[1] reflects some of the current thinking about conflict, how to cope with it and how it can even be a constructive force rather than a negative one.

Managing Conflict at Meetings

Open meetings or "sunshine" laws provide for meetings in a public setting for members of the public to observe policy making deliberations, and have access to those responsible for public policy. The board provides opportunities for public input at its meetings. The board's policies often limit the numbers of speakers and time allowed for each presentation.

As a public policy-making body, the board should strive to project an image of *receptivity*, of *fairness*, of *neutrality*, and of *determination*, to make the best possible decisions.

In times of controversy and conflict, careful planning, rehearsal, and execution of the board meeting agenda is advisable. Here are some suggestions:

- If public comment is sought during the meeting, be sure that spokesmen for both sides of the issue have an opportunity to speak.
- If a large number of people are in attendance, limit the number of spokesmen for both sides of the issue.
- Consider limiting the time each spokesman has for comments.
- Require that individuals register or sign up as spokesmen.
- consider taperecording the public comment portion of the meeting, for future reference.
- Consider the need for security at the meeting. If violence is clearly a possibility, provide for visible police presence.
- Encourage the board chairman to run the meeting in an even-handed but firm fashion.
- If those present become unruly or fail to follow the established procedures, recess the meeting.

The Causes of Conflict

Value Differences —These are differences in belief, in philosophy, in religion, or orientation to life. Because they are a part of our basic makeup, they are very difficult to change or negotiate. Some examples include:

- Creationism vs. Evolutionism controversy
- Back to the basics movement
- Conservative vs. liberal orientation to role of the federal government in education

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Differences in Perception — Viewing the same event, or even "facts," differently because of differences in our background and experiences, can lead to conflict, because our perceptions influence our judgment and decision making. Some examples include:

- Viewing conflict as threatening vs. viewing it as a challenge
- Viewing school discipline as "too soft" vs. viewing it as "humane "
- Viewing a school budget as a management tool vs. viewing it as an allocation of priorities

Differences in Goals —Differences in goals is a typical cause of conflict because we often cannot achieve all goals, and because going in one direction often precludes another direction. Some examples include:

- Emphasizing the basics vs. emphasizing academic programs
- Restricting programs to the academics vs. including sports and extracurricular activities
- Conserving resources vs. expanding programs, staff, and activities

Differences in Status or Position — These differences can cause conflict because of the expectations we attach to positions. A person in a higher position may feel threatened if someone in a lower status position tries to initiate change. Conflict can arise if the established channels of communication are not used; if activities are not considered part of a job description. Some examples include:

- New board member with "axe to grind"
- making promises or commitment as an individual board member
- Circumventing the channels of communication so that board or superintendent is surprised by information or concerns

Role Pressures — These are similar to differences in position or status, because they involve expectations on who is to do what. In a school system, teachers are expected to teach, administrators to manage and the board to set policies. While these are general "role expectations" confusion and conflict often result from the realities of carrying out these roles. Some examples include:

- Board members who respond individually to parent and community concerns
- Administrators who formulate policies from their own point of view
- Board or administrator encroachment in the other's domain.

The Five Styles

Each of five conflict handling styles has a different relationship to the issues of concern for relationships and concern for goals/position.

- **The Forcing Style** is high in its concerns for accomplishing goals and establishing position, but low in its concern for feelings and smooth working relationships. The forcing style is assertive, aggressive and competitive.
- **The Harmonizing Style** is opposite from forcing. Here, the concern for people, feelings and smooth working relationships is high, while the concern for goal and position is low. The harmonizing style is one of accommodating, giving-in, and acquiescing in order to preserve relationships in resolving the conflict.
- **The Negotiating Style** is moderate in both its concern for relationships and for goals and position. It is a "middle ground"

style, aimed at achieving compromise in order to resolve the conflict.

- **The Integrating Style** is high on both concern for relationships and concern for goals. It is aimed at finding a new set of goals which incorporate those of both parties, and which leads to growth in the working relationship. The integrating style stresses collaboration and problem solving to resolve the conflict.
- **The Avoiding Style** is opposite of integrating. It is low on both concern for relationships and concern for goals. Avoiding is aimed at not becoming involved with conflict and the strong feelings it may generate.

Each of these styles has its advantages and disadvantages, its strengths and weaknesses. In itself, no one style is "better" than another.

Constructive conflict management calls for the ability to read the situation and bring it to a useful style and approach. This means we should strive to develop our abilities and skills in all five styles, rather than to rely on only one or two.

Likewise, different stages of the conflict call for different styles. In the initial stages of bargaining, for example, both parties are likely to use a forcing style in order to establish the issues in which they are most interested. Later on, as bargaining continues, each party will have to assume a negotiating style if compromise is to be reached.

Handling of Major or Controversial Issues

As board president, you will face no greater challenge and/or crisis than when you and the board are faced with a major or controversial issue. Undoubtedly there will be various options and alternative solutions or courses of action. Sides may be taken, emotions can run high, compromise may appear almost impossible — and you are in the middle.

The manner in which you, as the president, preside over crucial meetings, your ability to convey an acceptance of varying, perhaps even contradicting, points of view, the very confidence you display which exhibits personal integrity, may all add as much to the final decisions and solutions as all the facts that are presented. As president you will need to rely on your personal abilities and skills as well as established procedures.

It is recommended that all items on the board agenda that are of major importance and concern, i.e., new curriculum programs, new plant facilities, major budget items, etc., be introduced at a regular meeting but that it be clearly understood that action will be postponed until the subsequent meeting of the board. This will give each board member ample time to carefully study the proposals and allow the community to respond in a responsible manner.

It is recommended that the following general format be followed in dealing with major and/or controversial issues.

1. The item be introduced as a staff report
2. Board members be given an opportunity to ask questions
3. The public be given an opportunity to comment and ask questions
4. Have cards available at the entrance to the board room prior to the board meeting on which the public can fill out their names, addresses and telephone numbers for possible future contact, state the topic they are interested in addressing, and whether they

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represent themselves or an organization. They should be heard in the order they have filled out their cards with the secretary of the board.

5. The matter should then be received by the board and referred to employee organizations or district committees as appropriate. Action should be delayed until a reply has been received from any such referral.
6. All staff reports should be processed through the administrative cabinet under procedures developed by the superintendent prior to presentation to the board. Administrative disagreements on policies or materials should be ironed out at this administrative level. Final reports to the board should be based on consensus judgement of the administrative cabinet. The ultimate recommendation to the board should be that of the superintendent. In small districts a board appointed *ad hoc* committee could be used for this purpose.
7. When the issue appears on the agenda at a subsequent meeting, the superintendent should be asked for a recommendation.
8. The president of the board should give **each** board member an opportunity, if he/she wishes, to make a brief prepared statement. The board president should then invite any citizen who has filed a card of intent to make any prepared statement. At the close of these statements, the board president, if he/she wishes to, should make a statement.
9. All board members should respect this procedure and, therefore, board discussions can concentrate on the issues rather than on how to take possible parliamentary advantage. It should be emphasized that the public should make their comments through the filing of the intent cards and public comments will be limited to the period of time set aside to address the board. At the end of each public presentation, board members through the president's chair should address any questions they have to the speakers. Their comments should be scheduled at the end of the agenda time given to the particular topic. It is very important that the procedure of going through the president be followed. Nothing is more destructive than a member of the board and someone in the audience entering into a conversation, debate and/or argument. It is critical that the president maintain control of the situation and in this manner provide everyone an open forum free from personal attacks and innuendoes.
10. Reports from the certificated and classified organizations and school site councils should be processed by the board in accordance with employer/employee agreements and/or district policy. These reports should always be approached in a systematic manner with the awareness that they have the potential for serious repercussions.

Dealing effectively with the various community groups and/or individuals is not easy. They can be unreasonable, hostile, angry, frustrated, and narrowminded — as well as articulate, thoughtful, reasonable and/or persuasive. They will exercise their right to address the board, and you, as the president, are the key.

The following suggestions can assist you in dealing as positively and effectively as possible with the public:

1. View the appearance of delegations as an indication of public

interest in the schools.

2. Require, through policy, that all petitions and requests for an audience before the board be directed to the superintendent of schools, preferably several days in advance of the meeting, so that they can be included on the agenda.
3. Treat every request or petition with courtesy.
4. Have a definite procedure for hearing delegations.
5. Insist upon having complete information before taking action.
6. Direct the superintendent or a staff member designated by him/her to conduct a study or gather additional information and present to the board the information and factual data needed for intelligent review of the issues or problems posed by the delegation.
7. Direct specific clarification-type questions to representatives of the delegation, if needed, to fully understand the issue; however, avoid debating or arguing the merits of their complaint or proposal.
8. Remember that citizens have a right to bring matters to the attention of the board, but that they do **not** have the right to participate in the deliberations of the board as it makes its decision.
9. Do not allow individual guests or delegations to disrupt the business of the board or to seek publicity through a demonstration.
10. Remember that no one can please everyone on every issue.

Handling Complaints

No board of education or professional staff will ever be able to please everyone in the district. There will always be some complaints and criticism. Some will be justified; some will be based on a lack of information or misinformation. In either case, criticism cannot be settled by being ignored. An acceptable grievance procedure for handling complaints and criticism should be adopted as official board policy.

The channel for complaints and criticism should always be through the superintendent to (if necessary) the board. An individual board member has no legal right to promise action or correction, and has a moral obligation to refrain from doing so. Rather than conduct one's own investigation of a complaint, a board member should refer the matter to the superintendent for staff investigation, and report back to the board.

A serious complaint or criticism should be presented to the board as a written, signed statement, or as an alternative, the individual could be invited to appear before the board and the matter should be made part of the agenda.

Individual board members should inform you and the superintendent of complaints and criticisms even though no action is required. In turn, the board should be kept informed by the superintendent of such criticisms so that no pressure can erupt in the community before board members have knowledge of the facts in the matter.

A sample policy for a board's handling of public complaints is included among the backup materials following this chapter.

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[1]Reprinted by permission from the booklet on 'conflict' in the "Keys to School Boardmanship" series, copyright 1980, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (Portland, Oregon).

Notes

Backup Materials

The following examples are a small selection of the sample policies, bylaws, rules and regulations available from the California School Boards Association through its for-a-fee board policy services.

Contact CSBA at 916 23rd Street, Sacramento, CA 95816 or (916) 443-4691 for more information on the variety of policy services offered and the current price for each of those services.

BP 1312.1

Community Relations

Complaints Concerning School Personnel

The Governing Board places trust in its employees and desires to support their actions in such manner that employees are freed from unnecessary, spiteful or negative criticism and complaints.

The Superintendent is directed to develop regulations which will permit the public to lodge criticism against staff members, which will assure a complete hearing, and which will protect the rights of the staff members and the district.

School employees who are sued as a consequence of performing their assigned duties shall be provided full legal service unless they have violated district policy, regulations or instructions.

The Governing Board shall annually review policies and regulations for complaints regarding school personnel.

NOTE: EDUCATION CODE 35160.5 REQUIRES SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ADOPT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WHICH PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE DISTRICT MAY USE TO PRESENT COMPLAINTS REGARDING EMPLOYEES OF THE DISTRICT.

Legal Reference:

Education Code	
35146	Closed sessions
35160.5	Requirement of school district policies: parental complaints re employees
35203	Duty of district attorney to defend certain cases
35204	Contract with attorney in private practice
44811	Upbraiding, insulting and abusing teachers
44812	Insulting and abusing teachers
44932-44949	Resignation, dismissal and leaves of absence (rights of employee; procedures to follow)

Community Relations

Complaints Concerning School Personnel

Complaints concerning school personnel should be made directly by the complainant to the person against whom the complaint is lodged. If the complaint is not resolved at this level, the complainant is requested to put the complaint in writing and to direct it to the employee's administrative supervisor, or principal. If the complaint, after review by the supervisor, remains unresolved, the supervisor shall refer the written complaint, together with the supervisor's report and analysis of the situation, to the Superintendent or his/her designee. The Superintendent's decision shall be final unless the complainant, the employee or the Superintendent requests a closed hearing before the Governing Board. If the employee so requests, an open hearing will be held.

Every effort should be made to resolve the complaint at the earliest possible stage.

The district will consider the complaint dropped if the complainant fails to put it in writing.

Hearing

No hearing, either closed or open, will be held by the Governing Board on any complaint unless the Board has received the Superintendent's written report concerning the complaint. The Superintendent's report shall contain, but not be limited to:

1. The name of each employee involved.
2. A brief but specific summary of the complaint and the facts surrounding it, sufficient to inform the Governing Board and the employee(s) as to the precise nature of the complaint and allow the employee(s) to prepare a defense.
3. A copy of the signed original of the complaint itself.
4. A summary of the action taken by the Superintendent, with his/her specific finding that disposition of the case at the Superintendent's level has not been possible, and the reasons why.

(*EXCEPTION: A written complaint may be sent to the Governing Board. The complaint must meet the informational requirements of subparagraphs 1 and 2 above. It must also include specific allegations of prior submission of the complaint in similar form to the Superintendent and his/her failure to effectively dispose of the matter. If the forwarded complaint complies with the above, it shall, subject to the Governing Board's agenda requirements, be heard at the Board's next regularly scheduled session, or any other session scheduled for the hearing of such matters.)

The district administration shall cooperate with the complainant and aid in the preparation of any formal complaint so as to quickly meet the informational requirements of these rules. Copies of the rules regarding the submission and handling of all such complaints shall be made freely available.

All parties involved, including the school administration, shall be requested to attend such a meeting, for the purposes of presenting all available evidence, allowing every opportunity for the explanation, and for clarifying the issue.

The decision of the Governing Board following the hearing shall be final.

6/85

Resources for Board Members

Resources from California School Boards Association. Call or write CSBA for current prices, at 916 23rd Street, Sacramento, CA 95816, (916) 443-4691.

Handbooks and Documents

A Blueprint for Educational Excellence
Becoming a Better Board Member
Board Meeting: The Brown Act (1984)
Board Presidents' Handbook (1985)
Boardsmanship (1984)
Board/Superintendent Roles, Responsibilities, & Relationships (1985)
CCBE Handbook (1985)
Factbook for School Finance Information (1985)
Micros for Managers (1984)
Policy Reference Updating Service
SB 813 Compliance Chart
Survey of School Boards Members Characteristics and Opinions (1982)
Toward Better and Safer Schools

How To Series

How To Work With the Media
How To Make Collective Bargaining Work *For* Your District (TF Report)
How To Keep Students In School (TF Report)
How To Evaluate Your School's Instructional Program (TF Report)

Task Force Reports

A Reawakening (1982) *Character Education Task Force*
Are Your Schools Good Schools? (1982)
Computer Literacy (1982)
Major Reports on School Reform (1983)
Reform: It's Up To You (1984)
Special Education (1982)
Student Violence and Vandalism (1980)
Superintendent Contract Clauses (1985)
Superintendent Evaluation (1985)
Technology in Education (1983)

Periodicals and Information Services

California School Boards Journal*
CSBA News*
Legislative Quick Report*
QUIK-CLUE
School Finance Information Service
School Law Notes
Newsletter Service *(four levels of service available)*

Public Confidence Products

Bumper Stickers
Public Schools — We're On The Move!
When You Talk — Your School Board Listens.
Public Education. Our First Priority *(brochures)*
Your Local School Board *(filmstrip)*

*These periodicals, which are supported by district membership fees, are sent free to trustees serving on member boards. Charges are for additional subscriptions.

The following account of a 1985 CSBA Board Presidents Workshop appeared in the March 1985 CSBA *News*.

Board Presidents Workshop*

Presidents Learn Leadership Strategies

Presidents of local boards of education can provide the leadership to accomplish the goal most board members would probably state as their own, "to set a climate in which education could flourish in my town."

So said former CSBA president Sheldon Baker in an after dinner speech to attendees of CSBA's Board Presidents Workshop, North, in Oakland February 22 and 23. "Education allows us to reach for the stars," said Baker, an attorney and, until 1981, a member of the board of Glendale Unified School District for 16 years. "Twenty years ago my reasons for running were to strengthen the schools in my town, to raise standards, to foster creativity and pride in learning," said Baker. "They're probably your reasons, too. Don't let the problem of budgets, collective bargaining, split boards or student drug use, for example, distract you from those goals."

Using Baker's speech as a keynote, Molly McGee, former board member and now an education and communication consultant, began the next day's program with a call for leadership at the presidential level, but noted that all board members are elected and consider themselves all leaders, too. "Your job as board president," said McGee, "is to unify the board toward constructive change." Those changes begin, she said, with

- evaluation of the board's meeting structure and agenda
- evaluation of your colleagues on the board and its relationship with the superintendent
- a plan for each month of your presidency.

McGee also advised use of Robert's Rules of Order and networking with other board presidents and CSBA "to avoid reinventing the wheel." And she suggested videotaping board meetings in order to critique and improve them. But, she also advised that adequate time be allowed for the board to view the tapes and that the viewing not be too long after the taping.

In separate presentations attorney Bob Shelburne of Kronick, Moskovitz, Tiedemann and Girard, CSBA legal counsel; Jerri Long, public information officer, Amador Valley/Pleasanton USD; Herb Salinger, CSBA executive director; and Maryanne Brooks, past board president, and Rudy Gatti, superintendent, Santa Clara USD, explored other specific aspects of board presidency.

Shelburne suggested an "inservice" for board presidents and other board members, with counsel and the superintendent, on the Brown Act and its provisions allowing closed sessions only for certain limited purposes. Noting "you meet at night; you need an attorney who can be available at night to answer your questions," Shelburne advised having the home phone number of the board's attorney.

Long's presentation on "creating a positive board image — communicating with the media" focused on two-way communications and awareness of the way something will look in print or on the air.

"When I was a reporter," she said, "I'd wonder why board members would try to make someone look foolish" at a public meeting. She advised instead to ask for information before the meeting so it could be provided outside the meeting or so the presentation at the meeting will be with the benefit of adequate preparation. "Don't ambush someone; it's bad PR."

During lunch, attendees were able to view and critique CSBA's new slide show on the role of school boards in society, which will soon be available for showing to civic groups, service clubs and government classes.

Salinger noted that board/superintendent relationships are vital to the health of the school system, but that the relationship is dynamic. "The cycle begins when the board selects the superintendent," he said, "but then a new board comes in, and they've inherited a superintendent they didn't select." So the process of maintaining a good relationship between the board and superintendent must be an on-going one, he said.

In the final two sessions of the day, Maryanne Brooks and Rudy Gatti first discussed and then demonstrated the dynamics of a school board meeting.

Brooks identified several areas board presidents could improve upon. Using the jargon of her district's Silicon Valley location, she suggested board members "build a database well in advance" by gathering and studying information which may be needed for future decision-making or to answer reporters' questions. "You should anticipate that a reporter is going to ask " about the local impact of a larger story, she said.

CSBA also offered training in effective public speaking to board members and administrators who participated in the spokesperson training sessions just prior to the beginning of the Board Presidents Workshops both in the north and south. Using video tape, trainers Hazel Mahone, former deputy executive director of CSBA and now superintendent, Grant JUHSD, and Molly McGee provided critical analysis of the substance and speaking style of each participant's public speaking delivery.

*California School Boards Association presents two yearly workshops specifically for board presidents, one in Northern California and another in Southern California, usually in January and February. Board presidents often find it valuable to make it a point to attend these annual training sessions.

Chapter 6. Calendar of Important Dates for Agenda Planning

Notes

The board's legal responsibilities, anticipated and unanticipated district events and circumstances and the needs of staff, students, parents, board members and the public are all factors influencing the contents of school board meetings. Many boards find a yearly calendar to be a crucial tool for agenda planning.

Board Action Calendar*

In your preparation for a board meeting, how many of you face the puzzle about what you left off the agenda? Or how many of you frustrate yourself trying to remember the actions that were taken at previous meetings? And how many times have you tried to relate current actions to the overall district priorities established at the beginning of the year?

The Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District in Sonoma County answered these questions with its "12-Month Board Action Calendar." The calendar groups board items by month and board meetings listing the projected actions and reports to be brought for the board's consideration, July through June. After actions are taken at board meetings, they are reported on the calendar with the appropriate disposition along with the date the action was taken. Each item brought for action or as a report is labeled either as a board priority, a board request, staff initiated, or an annual activity.

The calendar is a monthly organizer for the board president and superintendent, assisting them in preparing the board meeting agendas. Next to each item, a column clarifies whether it is a report, deserves action, is a first reading of a policy, or a presentation by staff or others. With this information available, the board president and superintendent have eliminated the guesswork when establishing the board agenda.

The Board Action Calendar is updated monthly, noting the action taken and any changes to the remainder of the calendar. After the action takes place or a report is delivered, the calendar states what happened to the action or when a report was presented. So each month the board has an update of the board actions taken to the present date. Each item is identified as either a board request (BR), a board priority (BP), staff initiated (SI), or an Annual Activity (A). New items added to the calendar are noted by a asterisk. A double asterisk is used when items already on the calendar are changed or moved to a different board meeting. This notation allows the board and staff to monitor action taken to complete the board priorities; it also gives the board a handle on the volume of items requested by the board members.

Development of the 12-Month Board Action Calendar evolved from the success of an action calendar showing monthly actions needed to implement the district's education reform programs of the 1983-84

Notes

school year. The educational reforms calendar was put together to illustrate and monitor the many facets of the reforms taking place as a result of the California Legislature's passage of the Hughes-Hart Reform Act of 1983.

Since the construction of the calendar, superintendent's staff members have seen these benefits:

- There is now an easy reference for the superintendent and staff to plan and/or prepare for board meetings.
- Items are reviewed monthly by staff to see if proper time allocations have been made by the staff member who has the prime responsibility for preparing the item.
- With the calendar containing both pending and past actions, it is easy for staff to keep track of the items passed by the board.
- Mid-year and final assessments, including superintendent and staff evaluations, are easier to track using the calendar.
- Board communication to district staff and parents has improved with the posting of the Board Action Calendar at each school on a monthly basis. Parents, school-site staff and community members have access to the board's plan of action for the upcoming meetings.
- Board and staff have a handy reference of the activities accomplished during the current year.

The 12-Month Board Action Calendar is new to the district this year, but already the impact is measurable. Its many organizational uses, as well as its communication implications, have impressed both the staff and the board. The calendar has demonstrated its use as a helpful tool to remove the puzzling, frustrating experience of planning for board meetings and monitoring board actions to see if they match established district policies.

Legal Calendar

The following calendar outlines some of a district's major legal responsibilities. This calendar may be used as the skeleton around which your own district calendar could be built. Because laws are subject to change, check these dates with staff or legal counsel each year.

Deadline	Responsibility	Requirement	Authority
July 1	Superintendent/ board	submit tentative budget to county superintendent	EC 42127(a)
July 1	Clerk of the board	submit annual report to county superintendent	EC 35250
August 1	Superintendent/ board	final budget hearing dates to county supt.	EC 42127(b)
First week in September	Board	public hearing on proposed budget	EC 42103
Sept. 7	Board	adopt budget, file budget with county superintendent	EC 42127

Sept. 15	Board	file of past budget prepared and made available for public inspection — along with current budget	EC 42100
Nov. 15	Superintendent/ board	file audit report with county clerk county supt. and state Depts. of Finance and Education	EC 41020
March 15	Superintendent/ board	dismissal notices for probationary employees hired before 1983	EC 44948.5
May 1	Superintendent	arrange for annual audit	EC 41020
May 15	Board	termination notices for certificated employees not re-hired for next year	EC 44949
May 29	Superintendent/ board	layoff notices sent to classified staff laid off for lack of funds when specially funded programs expire at end of school year	EC 45117(a)
Before May 30	Board (of district which doesn't automatically reemploy all staff)	mail notices to certificated employees asking their intent to remain employed beyond July 1	EC 44842

Footnote

*From "12-Month Board Action Calendar" by Mike Mclaughlin, from April/May 1985 *California School Boards* journal, pp. 27-28.

Notes

Handbook Evaluation

CSBA views the *Board Presidents' Handbook* as a working tool. Since you are the user of this tool, you can assist in its improvement. Please take a few minutes out of your busy schedule to complete this form and mail it to

California School Boards Association
Communications/Public Relations
916 23rd Street
Sacramento, CA 95816

Comments		Page	Very Valuable	Limited Value	No Value
_____	Introduction	v	_____	_____	_____
_____	**Chapter 1.** The Role of the				
_____	Board President	1	_____	_____	_____
_____	The Balance of Power	1	_____	_____	_____
_____	Presidential Style	6	_____	_____	_____
_____	Selecting the President	8	_____	_____	_____
_____	**Chapter 2.** Board Meetings	13	_____	_____	_____
_____	The Agenda	13	_____	_____	_____
_____	Consent Agenda	14	_____	_____	_____
_____	Mechanics of Meetings	15	_____	_____	_____
_____	Meetings Open to the Public —				
_____	Brown Act	16	_____	_____	_____
_____	Types of Meetings	17	_____	_____	_____
_____	Notice of Meetings	17	_____	_____	_____
_____	Board Minutes	19	_____	_____	_____
_____	Parliamentary Procedures	21	_____	_____	_____
_____	Backup Materials	26	_____	_____	_____
_____	**Chapter 3.** Board				
_____	Communications	35	_____	_____	_____
_____	Board President/				
_____	Superintendent				
_____	Relations	37	_____	_____	_____
_____	A Position of Trust	38	_____	_____	_____
_____	Getting Along	41	_____	_____	_____
_____	Backup Materials	44	_____	_____	_____
_____	**Chapter 4.** Board				
_____	Self-Evaluation	63	_____	_____	_____
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_____	CSBA's Board Self-				
_____	Evaluation Service	66	_____	_____	_____
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_____	**Chapter 5.** Leadership				
_____	Strategies and Resouces	87	_____	_____	_____
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_____	**Chapter 6.** Calendar of				
_____	Important Dates for				
_____	Agenda Planning	99	_____	_____	_____
_____	Board Action Calendar	99	_____	_____	_____
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